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Quebec talent stands out



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BRAND OF THE YEAR ▲

Shoppers' efforts pay off

On the cover

Eminent Toronto-based photographer Nigel Dickson shot this vibrant B&W portrait of Wal-Mart Canada president/CEO Mario Pilozi in the big box retailer's Mississauga, Ont. HQ. Neither is capable of a bad shot, despite Mario being under the weather and Nigel working sans Deluxe studio. We were thinking a fierce expression would be great – after all, Wal-Mart is launching its first trio of Supercentres this month and taking a run at Canada's grocery players with its expanded pantry plans. However, Mario's smiling eyes and naturally chipper demeanour ruled that out. To find out why he's so upbeat, read the Biz feature starting on page 11.



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Strategy was feeling gung ho about the new mediaverse, so we put the call out for nifty placement ideas that deviated from the norm. Likely we shouldn't have used the term "deviant media"...



It's all about the shoppers, duh

Welcome to our retail issue. From our Word from the Corner Office instalment with Wal-Mart prez Mario Pilozi, to Brand of the Year features on SDM, Home Depot and Canadian Tire, we've covered off a fair chunk of the big box/ubiquitous chain landscape. I could claim we planned it that way, but I'd be lying. A fair chunk of it was serendipitous.

Each year when we do our Brand of the Year industry poll and follow-up pundit survey, we're looking for the best of breed across all categories. This year, while a few stood out in areas such as CPG or financial, the majority of kickass performance kudos went to retailers.

So we bowed to the will of the people, revised our formula for Brand of the Year accordingly, and this year it's a retail sweep.

We also decided to try something new. Since even the most massive of marketers are jumping into the social media fray, recognizing that the niches are influencing the fragmented masses (see "15 megs of fame," page 26), we figured it was time to see what

brands get the Best of Year nod from individuals, rather than just industry consensus. So, we asked two marketers from different demos and markets to put their consumer hats on and share their personal Best Brand picks. We

The majority of kickass performance kudos went to retailers

discovered fervent disciples, bordering on obsession in one case, and after reading Jennifer Shah's vote, we suddenly all craved Starbucks, proving the power of WOM once again.

Now that I'm back with my latte – and a quick trek through Shoppers for the 10X Life brand point promo – I can't help but ponder the challenge Wal-Mart and the rest of the gang have before them. As everyone from Loblaws to Shoppers dips into each other's baskets, expanding soft goods or pantry respectively, increasingly the experience will be the differentiating factor. My well-worn Optimum card, or my habit of intently reading about new PC products, will typically trump over price. While a lot of that falls into the retail marketers remit, it's also a great opportunity for CPG folks to step up with solutions and exclusives – and to thereby increase their retail leverage.

Commoditization is also why genuine shopper insight is so crucial right now. Frito-Lay Canada is one company that successfully translated GPS cart data into a winning retail promo strategy (see "Cosying up to shoppers," page 32). And why initiatives like HP's company-wide foray into Best Buy stores to share the buying experience first hand, are going to pay off.

And while Big Retail has been in the catbird seat lately, the superstocking seismic shift will have an impact on all retail partners, regardless of weight, as there's always someone faster or bigger (Tesco), around the corner. For the cover shoot at Wal-Mart HQ we were in the midst of a warren of wee offices reserved for meetings with buyers. The décor was reminiscent of an eastern European airport circa the '60s, replete with a waiting room straight out of an ER; however, the otherwise barren Vendor Rooms had signage that encouraged a deeper – or at least more symbiotic – relationship. While some posters queried whether or not I purchased my supplies at Wal-Mart, another told me that Wal-Mart considers me a partner, rather than a mere Vendor. Encouraging, that.

Meanwhile, I'm about to embark on a new sideline thanks to a suggestion from the lads at Dentsu. Read all about Cart Stalking on our Deviant Media-themed Back Page, and watch out for me in Loblaws, where I'll be doing a consumer-generated sampling program for brands I like.

cheer,mm

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Will Frank be Mr. June?

A couple of months ago, DDB Canada's Frank Palmer approached *strategy* with a novel fundraising idea for the National Advertising Benevolent Society (NABS). The result: your office wall will sport a nifty calendar for 2007 featuring 12 of the most charismatic presidents, CEOs and senior creative teams in the country, and the charity that provides assistance for employees in the advertising and media industries will reap the benefits.

Each of the featured agencies made a donation to NABS and undertook a photo shoot depicting a famous movie scene with key ad industry players in the leading roles. Palmer's Toronto team took on the layout and design, General Printers offered printing for an unbelievable price, and *strategy* co-ordinated the project and will distribute it with the January issue. Special thanks to all of these partners, as well as to Jani Yates at the ICA who helped get the word out.

The response from the advertising community to this initiative has been overwhelming – especially for a first-time project. I'm pleased to report that NABS will benefit in the order of about \$15,000 from this endeavour that allowed senior agency people to have some fun and be creative – all for the industry's charity of choice.

This fall, NABS launched the "Friends of NABS" program to address challenges the society is facing with an increasing demand for services year over year for the past five years. An impressive number of agencies, media sellers, industry associations and advertising industry suppliers have already made a financial commitment to the program, and will be able to identify their organization as a "Friend of NABS" by including the recently unveiled logo on any promotional material. They are also eligible for a tax receipt for 100% of their donation. The calendar will promote the program nationally, but if you'd like to get involved, please feel free to contact Mike Fenton, president/CEO of NABS Canada at mfenton@nabs.org.

So thank you to all of those agencies for stepping up and out and to General Printers and especially Frank Palmer for making this happen. At a time of year when we are recognizing agencies for their brilliance and creativity, it's refreshing to see them give back.

'til next month, go well. **cm**

Claire Macdonald, publisher, *strategy* 416.408.0858

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PAGE S49



PAGE S52

**EXHIBIT
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“Benefits in general



Interior design

“Benefits in general aren’t very sexy,” says Elaine Dun, Coast Capital Savings project manager, corporate communications. So, to get employees revved up about a new plan the Vancouver-based credit union enlisted the help of Vancouver-based design firm Kaldor to spice things up a bit.

The effort included a teaser card, followed by different image-driven cards with retro games like word scrambles



on one side and benefit info on the other, as well as an 11-minute animated interactive quiz. Kaldor also helped Coast name the new benefits plan, FlexWise.

Dun says that while the effort was pricey, it wasn’t a tough sell internally because all the Coast execs are big on boosting employee engagement. “You need to motivate them – you don’t want them to just shove [the information] in a drawer and never look at it.”

Kaldor also works on Coast Capital Savings’ internal magazine, *Gist*. **AB**

Dove’s beauty viral

The latest Dove spot, “Evolution,” by Ogilvy Toronto, was the most-watched video on YouTube on Oct. 16, scoring hundreds of thousands of views in the first couple of days of being uploaded. And, Dove’s American marketing team



liked the Canadian spot so much that they unleashed their substantial PR resources, landing coverage by big U.S. outlets like *ABC News*, *Good Morning America*, *CNN* and *Entertainment Tonight*. Check out the spot + creds in our Screening Room at <http://www.strategymag.com/screeningroom> **AB**

All hands definitely on the Edge

The new Ford Edge CUV, which hits the streets this month, was propelled by a campaign that represents the epitome of the new mediaverse plan – integrated across all touchpoints and within the media environment, and inviting frequent interaction.

Edge marketing led off with pre-launch brand advertising from Y&R, with a movie trailer style teaser TV and cinema spot, featuring glam mysterious shots of the car while a v/o from Kiefer Sutherland advised “Patience, patience.”

Now, in addition to launch brand ads, a series of Global promos tease viewers to an online contest. The contest spots also mimic content, but rather than the vehicle, star a hero-type leading man, which Gaye McDonald, VP marketing ventures with CanWest MediaWorks, and architect of the promo campaign, says was created to put the focus on the “hero” buyer.

What’s novel here is that the three 60s replicate the background environment of three popular Global series, and the hope was that on Oct. 30 when viewers first saw the spots’ leading man detecting away in a police HQ setting, they might momentarily think it was a scene from *Prison Break*. Ditto for his doctor turn in the spot airing during *House*, or his high roller act destined for *Las Vegas* commercial breaks on Nov. 3.

In each promo the hero solves crime, saves lives and generally wins large, but is frustrated by one thing, “how to stay on the Edge.” Each spot intrigues



viewers to check out stayontheedge.com to win an Edge, in what is essentially a digital version of the old “keep your hand on the car” game. The contest, developed by Y&R, encourages frequent participation as only a certain number of virtual hands can be on the cyber CUV at once, so contestants get bumped off and alerted back by e or SMS to have another go.

Not only does the chameleon hero approach fit with Ford’s aspirational over vehicle-feature driven strategy, it meshes with the auto giant’s push into entertainment. Peter Jansen, VP crossover & CUV communications manager with Ford Motor Company of Canada, says of the approach: “We wanted to integrate and engage, and to break through with entertainment. And it doesn’t stop here, we’ll take it to print as well with the *National Post*, and web activity on the Ford and CanWest sites.” The *Post* ads involve a unique gatefold launch ad followed by multiple vertical insertions and innovative edge-of-page executions.

Jansen says the crossover market is growing dramatically, and the Edge “represents Ford’s new face.” The midrange (starts at \$32,999) model will skew slightly younger for the category, so indexed well with the CanWest shows which span the Edge’s target M/F 30s/40s demo. The promos will also air in similarly-genred shows, and the *Las Vegas* series will also include virtual product integration. And all that, according to McDonald, “is environmental advertising at its finest.” **MM**

aren't very sexy"

WATER COOLER

HOLIDAY CLASSICS

Which holiday campaign are you most looking forward to?

33.33% Canadian Tire

30.16% Telus

22.22% Zellers

14.22% Tim Hortons



Socially acceptable

The launch of last month's Toronto After Dark Film Festival had an impressive online social network presence, thanks to Halifax-based agency Extreme Group.

"We built a character to represent each genre [horror, sci-fi and kung fu] and treated them like they were real people," explains Shawn King, Extreme's VP/CD, adding that as "real," it made sense to set the characters up with their own websites with "webcams," as well as MySpace, YouTube and even Lavalife accounts. "It's quite an elaborate little web."



The campaign held up in the court of online public opinion: User ratings and feedback on YouTube are all positive. For his part, King wasn't worried. "If we thought the work was horrible, we wouldn't have put it there."

All efforts drove users to www.lookingforroommate.com, linking to all of the related content. And, offline, posters around Toronto advertised, "roommates wanted" to live with the characters, and also drove to web. The campaign also includes banner ads on social networking and film-related sites. **AB**

Brilliant!

◀ By Paula Costello ▶

TP brands typically play a one-ply upmanship game on the softness front in a battle of the cuddly icons, but Scott Paper's Cashmere has taken it to a new level, using potty tissue to create couture.



Catwalks are the new black

Seems a lot of brands that aren't traditionally beacons of fashion are getting onto the runway. Wal-Mart staged a fashion show in downtown Toronto for its George line of clothing recently (see Biz, page 11) and L'Oréal bowed its first products-driven beauty runway last month as part of its title sponsorship of Fashion Week. And while Scott just launched its first student-designed couture collection as part of a finely woven campaign that spans TV and print ads and an online contest, it can claim prior ownership of this runway-as-media turf.

Its White Cashmere Collections in 2004 and 2005 had 16 top Canadian fashion designers creating garments from white cashmere fabric to begin to link the softness of cashmere wool to Cashmere TP in consumers' minds. Both years generated more than 125 million impressions and over \$3 million in audit value. In its latest iteration, Scott corralled design students from Toronto and Montreal to craft garments composed entirely of toilet paper. "We created the competition to celebrate news that Cashmere, the progressive evolution of Cottonelle, is taking its place on Canadian store shelves," says Nancy Marcus, VP of marketing at Mississauga, Ont.-based Scott Paper.

The students began with 10-ft.-wide sheets of uncut Cashmere bathroom tissue then did everything from twirling it into yarn and knitting it to creating a papier maché corset. Ultimately, 16 contributed to the first-of-its-kind Cashmere Bathroom Tissue Couture shows held in Toronto and Montreal. Attendees were largely press, and with results still coming in, Scott had received 34 print articles, 37 broadcast segments, and 25 online articles. Impressions were at 58 million and the PR value was \$850,000. All the garments are now on view at cashmere.ca where Canadians can vote for their favourite and vie for a trip to Fashion Week in NYC, supported by print, TV and online drive to site efforts.

Meanwhile, the eye-catching TV and print brand advertising out of John St. pick up the roll so to speak by featuring a fabulous ball gown made of toilet paper. PALM Arnold did French Canada. Strategic Objectives originally devised the White Cashmere Collection fabric-to-brand link concept, and this year saw a benchmark of brand marketing integration with the development of the student competition, the advertising campaign and the website by Propeller Digital.

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Convenience and customization

With the unveiling of its Supercentres, Wal-Mart Canada gets closer to achieving its goal of offering consumers a customized experience within a one-stop shop.

Strategy sat down with president/CEO Mario Pilozi to find out how.

◀ By Lisa D'Innocenzo ▶

How can you focus on a local customer and then market a U.S. commercial that's one size fits all? One does not fit all, so we don't believe it's the right thing to do

Wal-Mart just got a lot bigger. The already gigantic general merchandise chain is on the eve of introducing three Supercentre stores – in London, Ancaster and Stouffville, Ont. – and plans to unveil four more in the new year, also in Ontario (Sarnia, Scarborough, Vaughan, and Brampton). Measuring between 165,000 to 200,000 sq. ft., they will house all of the general merchandise Wal-Mart is known for, plus enhancements to apparel, electronics, home décor and grocery, including, for the first time, fresh produce, baked goods and meat.

Mario Pilozi, who has been president/CEO of Mississauga, Ont.-based Wal-Mart Canada for the past four years, says it's the next phase of the retailer's ongoing evolution that began when it first arrived on Canadian soil in 1994.

"We have expanded the assortment right from the get-go, and we have been adapting to more of what the customer wants. In 1998, we came out with our first pantry with a few items, and last year, we opened a pantry over 5,000 sq. ft., with 7,000 items. [The Supercentre] is the next step," he says. In most of the countries Wal-Mart operates in, it's already a heavy hitter in the grocery category.

What kind of opportunity exists here? Wal-Mart Canada won't divulge market share data, but recent figures from CIBC World Markets suggest that the total grocery market size of Ontario alone is \$22.3 billion. Loblaw has 40.7% of that pie, Metro 20.1%, and Sobeys 12.3%. At this pre-Supercentre stage, Wal-Mart has a mere 3.5%.

Pilozi, who joined Wal-Mart Canada in 1994, and had been with Woolco Canada for about 30 years, explains the new Supercentres will address the needs of time-starved customers. "They want to get whatever they need, as much as possible, under one roof in a convenient fashion. That is why we believe this is the right time to get into a Supercentre."

Pilozi says advertising will continue to focus on value, while also getting across the one-stop shop message by showcasing a wide assortment of goods. "With TV there are different spots for different reasons. We have paid more attention to 'store of the community,' we have commercials in different languages, and commercials for a particular business, but there's always the message of good value." Agency partners are Toronto-based Publicis, as well as Allard-Johnson in Quebec.



The Supercentres, with their huge SKUs, promise to be a force to be reckoned with

In-store will also continue to be an important medium for the retailer, as emphasized by the launch of “shopcast” in the Supercentres (see sidebar). Pilozzi explains that communication starts in the parking lot, with messaging on cart carrels and on the building, and then continues inside through POS. “You walk into our front doors and there’s communication on rollbacks, there’s what we call our comp rail where consumer items and prices hit you right away. You walk into our departments with our huge signs over end caps, with our flags, with our Made in Canada program, with our private-label signing – it’s all communication.”

Strategy sat down with Pilozzi at Wal-Mart HQ in the weeks leading up to the launch of the trio of Supercentres to find out more about the launch of the mega-stores, as well as how they will fit into Wal-Mart’s overall strategy of serving the needs of time-pressed consumers in a customized fashion.

How do you get into customers' heads?

We are moving towards regionalization.

Once upon a time it was all centralized here in Toronto; today we have two regional offices. We have an office in Montreal, so our regional VP no longer sits here in Toronto and tries to manage the Eastern part of Canada. They live and shop in that community, so they understand it better. The regional manager who operates the Western provinces lives in Calgary. So part of our home office is in



Calgary. So that is, in essence, an admittance that we have to do a better job locally and focus on the local customer.

We [also conduct] quite a few focus groups. We have subscribed to software and applications that give us a good makeup of the different communities where we have stores or want to put up stores. We have the tools [to customize].

Why have you decided to become more decentralized now?

You as a customer want to be treated as different as you are. You as a customer are smarter, much more educated, you have access to all the retailers in the world through your desktop, and you know what’s available and therefore you demand those products. And if you demand them, we have to have them. That didn’t exist 10 years ago.

What are some examples of localizing as a result of regional office/research input?

What’s important is that our regional VPs can become the CEO of a local business...we know better what local customers want and we can react to opportunities like the Calgary Stampede [as an] example.

In apparel, we know that the Prairies actually have bigger, taller people, so sizing is specialized. Tofu is popular in some places and irrelevant in others. Sports like fishing need different products and different marketing market by market. We have, and market, ethnic food, ethnic health and beauty, cosmetics, in areas where ethnic specialization makes sense. We need to know differences exist store to store, and we need to treat our stores individually.

How is your marketing structured?

We have a great team that was pulled together following the tragic death of Lou Puim, our

Wal-Mart gets trendy

Have you noticed that Wal-Mart's apparel advertising has gotten much more, well, with the times? It's no coincidence, says president/CEO Mario Pilozi. In fact, it is part of the retailer's strategy to reach out to increasingly fashion-hungry consumers with new marketing, a new retail presentation, and new categories within the clothing mix.

"The trend now is to be more relevant, and trendier, so the marketing overall has to reflect that," he explains. "If you walk into most of our stores, the visual merchandising is different. We are trying to merchandise more of a co-ordinated look, rather than one item for a price. So as our merchandising strategy changes, the marketing strategy has to follow."

To that end, Wal-Mart held a fashion show in downtown Toronto at the end of September to showcase the designs of its U.K.-conceived, "cheap chic" George label. Co-ordinated by an international group of Wal-Mart employees (including Canadian and U.K. fashion and marketing teams), with external assistance from Toronto-based public relations firm National and a team of fashion-show professionals, the event drew hundreds of spectators who gathered to watch 22 models strut their stuff, including Canada's Next Top Model Andrea Muizelaar.

The show was one component in a national "It's all about style" campaign for George, which includes print ads in fashion and lifestyle pubs, with images ranging from high-fashion creative to models dressed in everyday garb accompanied by advertorial copy featuring a "London Style Report." Meanwhile, new billboard ads in Toronto, Calgary and Vancouver launched on Oct. 2.

Adds Pilozi: "Our brands are becoming more defined, and the customer is starting to see more of what they're looking for [at Wal-Mart]."



Miss Universe
Canada Alice
Panikian, George
Panikian, George
global designer Sadie
Robson, Andrea
Muizelaar and Chris
Johnston, VP apparel



George in particular has performed extremely well, and Wal-Mart has expanded the collection from women's

wear, to lingerie, maternity, plus-size, accessories, men's wear and children's wear. Swimwear is up next. In fact, since its debut two years ago, George has spurred double-digit growth in the entire women's apparel category at Wal-Mart. Apparently, it pays to be fashionable. **LD**



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*We appreciate all those expressing interest.
Only those selected for an interview will be contacted.*



CASINO WINDSOR™



Publicis spots for Wal-Mart apparel reflect the retailer's push on fashion



past marketing VP. We have a marketing director, Mike Dombrow, individuals who head up key areas like advertising, and people in the field who figure out what marketing makes sense locally, where they live and work. The team rolls up directly to our chief merchandise officer Mike Huffaker. For us, marketing goes way beyond ads and signs. Marketing works hard to understand our customers, how they want our relationship to be today and in the future and from region to region.

All your ads seem to be Canadian-made – is your desire to appeal to local differences a factor in this decision?

How can you focus on a local customer and then market a U.S. commercial that's one size

fits all? One does not fit all, so we don't believe it's the right thing to do. Does that mean we will never have a commercial from the U.S.? As long as it fits the Canadian consumer.

How does your new CSR strategy fit into the larger picture?

We have five branches of CSR – [environmental sustainability, ethical sourcing, diversity, people (HR) and store of the community] – and there is a committee working on those [each with a senior executive member heading it]. [In terms of the environment], we have done a lot of work with our buildings and they are a lot more efficient. We are purchasing renewable power. We've been on the track of ethical sourcing for quite a few years, and that's a committee I head

in Canada. I've been in China and Bangladesh and I try to understand what makes a good factory. So I'm personally involved with that.

With diversity, we have been trying for many years to be a company of the people, in other words, to be a reflection of our customer base. Now we're paying more attention to it. And [then there's] store of the community.

If you ask any company, do you care about these issues, everybody's going to say: "Of course we care." And we cared in the past also. But we really never dedicated resources, and as of a year ago, we started to dedicate resources and have people responsible for it.

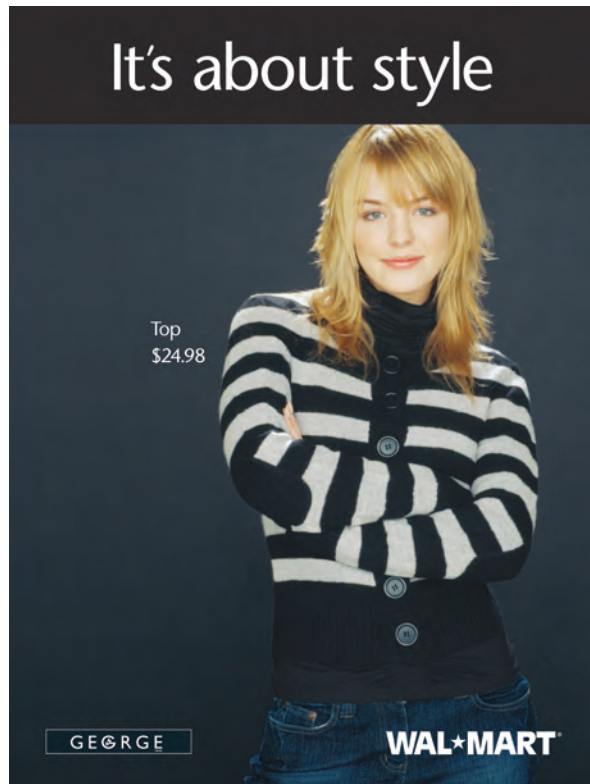
Why dedicate resources to these initiatives?

It's more important to consumers. Whenever

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to add value.**

you hear of topics that are close to the public's heart, sustainability comes up. [With Hurricane Katrina], because of our size, we were able to have a positive impact. Our U.S. CEO Lee Scott pointed to this example of using our size for good, and said let's pay more attention to it and be better at it. We always cared about ethical sourcing, and it made good business sense to save energy, but we're paying more attention to it now.



Can you expand on the idea of store of the community? What type of local programs do you run?

We ask our store managers and the management team to be part of the community, understand its needs and make a contribution. We have a matching grant, so if there's a need in a particular community and the store has a fundraising event, we say: "For every dollar you raise, we will match it." It gives store managers ownership, in the sense that it's all about their community. It's all very personal. And I think that makes a huge difference. ■

Wal-Mart TV has a spot for you



When Canada's first Wal-Mart Supercentres open this month, they'll have an in-store TV network that will broadcast ads and company info.

And the new medium is one other advertisers can eventually tap into, says Mario Pilozi, president/CEO of Wal-Mart Canada. "We believe

the best means of communications is in-store, because you [can] communicate directly with your customer," he says. It will roll out nationally throughout 2007 and ultimately the plan is to be chain-wide.

LCD screens will be installed in high-traffic areas and at cash registers, where consumers will learn about universal store initiatives like Rollbacks and gift cards, as well as get targeted information that is relevant to specific departments and local needs, like community fundraising events.

Supported by Toronto "narrowcasting" company ShopCast (www.shopcast.tv), Wal-Mart ShopCast TV has been four years in development and is modelled in part on a similar nine-year-old network broadcast in the U.S. The Mississauga, Ont.-HQ'd retailer has high hopes for its ability to grab the attention of Canadian shoppers at the first moment of truth. And Wal-Mart traffic clocks in at one million a day.

Initially ShopCast will be operating a check-out channel at the Supercentres, with a full-scale rollout planned for Jan. 24 involving 10 Ontario stores and bumping up to nine department channels. In January ShopCast will invite national advertisers to buy into the first year of the network (Jan. to Sept.), and to participate in rollout research. Ultimately, advertisers can buy by demo or day part and geo-target. The check-out channel will have a cost per thousand somewhere between \$4-\$5, and within the store, channels will be priced on a per store, per two-week cycle basis.

Certainly, the findings of a comprehensive pilot of the program in Meadowvale, Barrie, Brampton, Oakville, and Etobicoke, Ont. (five stores were compared against five control stores), look promising. Conducted by Muldoon and Company in conjunction with Starch Research, the results of 1,000 surveys and multiple focus groups suggest that customers are getting the messages loud and clear. In fact, 57% said it "reminded them of products available at Wal-Mart," and 35% said it "informed them of products they did not know Wal-Mart carried."

And the additional sounds and sights didn't seem to bother shoppers either: 90% said Wal-Mart was creating a "more pleasant shopping experience" and 81% said it is "a great addition to the store." *By Lisa D'Innocenzo with files from Mary Maddever*

OUR VIEWERS ARE
refined

Knows how to do a sun salutation in Yoga class • INDEX 172
Attends the opera • INDEX 181
Enjoys reading subtitles at the movies • INDEX 150



who to watch.

ROCK SOLID

How Labatt's Stéphane Boulay has managed to retain Budweiser's number one position in Quebec and help grow Bud Light along the way

◀ By Annette Bourdeau ▶

Charting new territory doesn't faze Stéphane Boulay. From launching his own business fresh out of university to testing old-fashioned flipbook techniques on Montreal's Métro for Budweiser, Labatt Canada's marketing integration manager for Quebec injects his entrepreneurial spirit into whatever he's doing. "I don't like always doing the same thing," says Boulay, 36.

Since joining Labatt in 2002 as brand solutions manager for Bud in Quebec, Boulay has helped it attain its spot as the number one beer in the province for the last two years. Also under his leadership, the Quebec activation of the 2005 national relaunch of Bud Light truly



He's got this sixth sense about what will work

resonated with Quebecers, and helped the brand boost its sales by 100%-130% this year. "He knows the Quebec market very well," notes John Gallagher, EVP at BBDO Montreal. "He's got this sixth sense about what will work."

Much of Boulay's drive to know the Quebec market and try new things can be credited to his four-year stint working with a partner to launch and run their own tour business right after Boulay graduated from Université de Montréal with a business administration degree. They were taking on competitors like Air Transat but made a significant dent in the market share, even winning a Tourism

Gold Award from the Quebec government in 1999 for best marketing/sales actions in international markets.

Boulay says a big lesson he took from the experience was accountability. "When you make a decision when you have your own business, it's on your shoulders." After deciding he wanted to move to a bigger company, Boulay joined Club Med as a commercial director, where Labatt was one of his clients. After a year with Club Med, he jumped to Labatt because he thought it would be a great challenge to work in such a competitive category.

During his four years managing the Bud and Bud Light brands in Quebec (he now has a more senior strategic planning role for all of the Labatt brands in Quebec), Boulay focused on grassroots initiatives to make the iconic American brand relevant for Quebecers, like sponsoring university football teams and sports shows on RDS. And, when it comes to the big stuff, like leveraging the brand's North American sponsorship of the NFL, he makes sure to customize it for the market.

"With the Superbowl, we did 250 executions in the field in Quebec, with some retail on top of that. The brand is really active," he says. His boss, Rob McCarthy, director, core premium brands for Labatt Breweries of Canada, says he's impressed by Boulay's entrepreneurial spirit. "He has an incredible drive to get things done. He never says no, and he always delivers."

McCarthy points to Boulay's efforts leading the Quebec activation of Budweiser's sponsorship of Montreal's Grand Prix du Canada as particularly well executed. Boulay faced a unique challenge when he first signed on for 2004 because, along with Bud Quebec sponsoring, Budweiser International, was sponsoring one of the F1 teams, BMW Williams. "The challenge was to find a good balance between...a local brand sponsorship for an international event in Quebec, and an international sponsorship from Anheuser-Busch for an F1 team, which was also another good opportunity for activation," Boulay recalls.

He wound up spearheading an integrated eight-week effort with a traditional ad campaign

including OOH, TV, radio, online, POS and PR efforts, as well as on-premise promos leading up to the event. At the Grand Prix itself, Budweiser had an impressive experiential presence, including a Budweiser F1 beer garden, a Budweiser "Big Rig" (a "party on wheels" featuring live music), and promos at the Crescent Street Grand Prix Festival.

Boulay's plan has since been used at the 2005 and 2006 Grand Prix, and Anheuser-Busch is using it as a best practice example. "I won my challenge with F1. It's now considered by Anheuser-Busch and Labatt as the example to follow in our business – the way it was activated in tune with the brand positioning, the multi-channel executions generating sales and the experiential side," notes Boulay.



Bud's rocking Métro (above);
Grand Prix support (right)

Another successful Quebec activation led by Boulay was leveraging the 2005 national relaunch of Bud Light. "It's a brand that has been the little brother of Budweiser – we decided to put the gas behind it and make it a brand in itself," Boulay explains.

One particularly bold move was his decision to muscle in on Molson's territory and try to associate the brand with the NHL, and the Habs in particular – a decision he really had to fight for. "I said there is a place for another

player, and we'll play the game differently," he recalls, adding that he spent three hours with execs grilling him about the move.

But, a year later it seems to have paid off. Boulay focused on NHL retail promos, as well as sponsoring RDS hockey updates and even creating a Bud Light-sponsored radio reporter on ENERGIE named Ellen Ash (pronounced "LNH"). All of this has helped develop instant brand equity around this NHL sponsorship, says Boulay, adding that Bud Light sales during the last playoffs were up 130% over the year before.

Boulay is no stranger to fighting for initiatives he believes in. When his agency BBDO Montreal pitched a unique flipbook-style wrap of a Montreal Métro train for Budweiser, not everyone at Labatt was initially on board for the innovative move. "I pushed really hard for it," he says. BBDO's Gallagher says the initiative wouldn't have happened without Boulay's enthusiasm. "Stéphane was always behind the idea." The result was a visual stunt that worked – people waiting for their train saw a guy playing his guitar when the train was moving.



In his latest role at Labatt, Boulay's focus has shifted from specific promotions to bigger-picture strategic planning. He acts as a liaison between the Quebec office and the Labatt Toronto headquarters, and is currently working on planning for 2007. He's tight-lipped about what we can expect to see from Labatt next year, saying only: "We'll always show 'bigness' with the brands."

FIVE QUESTIONS

Favourite book

The novel that I've read a few times: The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho. One message I like in that novel: "Follow your dream." It is a simple book, not pretentious.

Favourite current TV show

24. I don't watch it weekly. I just wait for the complete season and my girlfriend and I spend two weekends in a row glued to our TV. Now I am waiting for season five.

Favourite vacation spot

Best trip of my life? Turkey. The hospitality of Turkish people, amazing sites like Cappadocia and, south of the country along the Mediterranean, the great city of Istanbul. I don't have a regular vacation spot. I try to do trips that are a combination of cultural discoveries, some outdoor moments, some urban moments.

Number one thing you look for in an ad agency

I look for people who have the sense of creativity and also the sense of business. People who listen to get the brand objectives. It is also important to be open.

Favourite way to unwind

Sitting in my white-water kayak in summer or snowboarding during the winter. Complete moments of freedom and relaxation.

OUR VIEWERS ARE
active

Shoots hoops • INDEX 169
Hits the waves to windsurf • INDEX 372
Slaps on sports-related pain relieving rub • INDEX 174



who to watch.

How Mail Champlain's
Julie G  linas stretches her
marketing budget with a little
help from her friends

◀ By Annette Bourdeau ▶



PRETTY PERSUASION

Julie G  linas knows how to catch more flies with honey. The charming marketing and communications director for Brossard, Que.'s Mail Champlain doesn't have a big budget, but she more than makes up for it by tapping into her impressive network of industry contacts.

"I've learned not to be afraid to ask favours. And to return them, of course," G  linas says. "[The marketing industry] is a small village. I've learned that if you're nice, it's worth it."

Being nice (and persuasive) has helped

G  linas score impressive coups over the seven years she's been at the 150-merchant suburban shopping mall. Most recently, she talked H&M not only into setting up shop there, despite the area not meeting the chain's typical market demo specs, but also to let her use its logo in a co-branding campaign – something the retailer has a policy against. Even when H&M first said no, G  linas wasn't deterred. "I convinced my superiors to work on a [co-branding] project anyway," she recalls. "We presented

it, and the woman from H&M Canada said 'Sweden will say no.' I kept pushing." Her tenacity paid off, because the head office okayed the simple billboard that melded H&M's logo into Mail Champlain's.

H&M opened on Oct. 5, and G  linas coaxed the retailer into doing a special pre-opening sale the day before for Mail Champlain clients, partners and local celebrities like the cast of the TV show *Virginie* to build extra buzz.

G  linas owes her strong communications

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skills to her PR background – she holds a PR degree from Université de Montréal, and began her career at Cossette's Optimum PR. Her ability to get messaging out is clear in her mall employee newsletter, which won

tips and contests. "It took me a lot of time to put it together, but it gave instant results," she explains. "After the first issue, people called me to ask when the next issue would be out."

Last February, Gélinas launched a school break promotion to increase family traffic in the mall. She didn't have enough money to do it alone, so she convinced Le Lait marketing director and longtime mentor Nicole Dubé to sign on as a

sponsor. "[Gélinas] said: 'I have the location, I have the people. You bring the money,'" says Dubé. Despite her successful pitch, Gélinas was still nervous. "There was a lot of pressure. Nicole said: 'I need results – I don't want to be accused of favouritism,'" recalls Gélinas. She didn't need to worry – the promo was a big success. Mall traffic was up 18%, and over 90% of visitors surveyed said they'd return for a similar event. Retail sales were up 8%, and food court sales up 13%. Dubé wasn't disappointed. "It was very, very successful," she says.

Gélinas first met Dubé in 1992, when she handled PR and admin at the Publicité Club

I've learned not to be afraid to ask favours. And to return them, of course

Gélinas's *Cosmo*-like newsletters are a hit with mall employees and have won an award

a Summit Creative Award in 2002.

Gélinas knew she'd have to do something different to get the over 2,000 mall employees excited about her promos. So she packaged the newsletter, which she writes herself, like a mini-*Cosmopolitan*, complete with fashion

de Montréal while Dubé was president. "I recognized her talent right away," recalls Dubé. "After just a month at the club, she knew everything. She was always suggesting new things, and saying: 'Why aren't we doing this?'"

FIVE QUESTIONS

Favourite book

Corps et âmes – Le prodige (Body and Soul) by Frank Conroy

Favourite TV commercial of all time

Mastercard: the whole "Priceless" series

Last ad that inspired you to make a purchase

Elizabeth Arden *Idealist* beauty cream

Most useful business book, and why

Le protocole d'Yves Dussault. Because good business manners make the difference

Favourite way to unwind

Combining the pleasure of shopping and eating chocolate!

Gélinas jumped at the opportunity to learn from the seasoned marketer. "I really learn by surrounding myself with mentors – I truly want to learn as much as I can."

Gélinas is currently gearing up for the busy Christmas season. For the fourth year now, entertainers from the children's TV program *Cornemuse* will perform an exclusive show in conjunction with Santa's big entrance. Landing *Cornemuse* in 2003 was another big score for the mall, engineered by Gélinas. "I was tired of the same [Christmas promos]. I wanted them in. Everybody said: 'You'll never get them,'" she says. But get them she did. The show lures an average of 5,000 people to the mall, and consistently makes *Journal de Montréal*'s list of best Santa entrances. "I'm always trying to do things to differentiate," she explains.

Dubé predicts that Gélinas' strong leadership and diplomatic skills will take her far. "She's a key player for any organization." ■

OUR VIEWERS

value the good Life

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Hopped aboard a cruise • INDEX 154

Plans to kick the smoking habit • INDEX 149



BY DESIGN

John st. merges with design firm Amoeba

By Natalia Williams



From left: Michael Kelar, Mikey Richardson and Ryan Smolkin of Amoeba

Five year-old agency john st. is buying design boutique, AmoebaCorp. It's a move to bring design thinking to the heart of client strategy, says john st. president/CEO Arthur Fleischmann, an approach that is still somewhat overlooked in Canada. "[Design] is not just a world of logos and corporate brochures," he says. "It can be fundamental to solving the problem, not just the execution."

AmoebaCorp is a 10-year-old agency based in Toronto founded by OCAD grads Michael Kelar and Mikey Richardson. Ryan Smolkin is the third principal. Over the years, their client work has included Coke, Virgin Mobile and Nike. They also designed Molson's "I am Canadian" logo. The agency, which has 10 staff, has worked with john st. for over two years now on clients such as Maple Leaf Sports, AstraZeneca and Tetley. They will now reside in john st.'s offices.

"The biggest advantage to working with them has been

[when we] bring them in early," says Fleischmann. With new client AstraZeneca, the team was brought in at the pitch, he says, a move that is helping to add synergy and a stronger corporate identity to the work. "They're able to come at it from a very different perspective," he says, adding that it helps insert stronger consistency throughout all of a client's channels of distribution.

Tetley is another brand that has benefited from Amoeba's design thinking. "We went back to square one about how the brand should look and feel. This was even before the client saw creative," he says. "[The result] was fantastic."

According to Fleischmann, while many agencies have in-house design talent, involving them early in the process is still rare in Canada. But he points to Miami-based Crispin Porter + Bogusky's work for Ikea and Mini as one example of successfully incorporating design thinking into creative and strategy early on. ■

HIRES THAT MAKE YOU GO HMMM...

Peg Hunter is **Home Depot's** new senior director of marketing. She replaces Pat Wilkinson, who left in September for the big-box retailer's Atlanta HQ. Hunter was previously VP marketing at Grand & Toy.

Following the surprise resignation of president/CEO Paul Cummings in June, **Mitsubishi** has parachuted **Koji Soga** from its Japan HQ into the post. Soga has spent most of his 38-year career with the brand in various leadership roles.

Former Foot Locker Canada director of marketing **Karen van Hunnik** has been wooed to Calgary-based **Forzani Group**, which owns Sport Chek and Coast Mountain Sports. Forzani

Group's recent revamp of its key brands has so far resulted in same-store sales being up an average of 6%, as of September. Last month, the chain purchased Nevada Bob's Golf. In the newly created director of corporate marketing position, van Hunnik is responsible for advertising, promos and PR.

Larry Gregson is the latest add-on at **Fallsview Casino Resort** and **Casino Niagara** as its new VP marketing. Gregson was previously VP marketing at Casino Rama. Earlier this year, Fallsview also lured Art Frank from Casino Rama. Frank is credited with spurring the casino's expansion, which included an entertainment centre and spa, and resulted in record financial success.

MARKETERS



From left: the casinos' Gregson; Forzani's van Hunnik and Taxi's Burton and Pollock

Taxi Vancouver is set to open in 2007. Taxi Canada president Rob Guenette says much like the opening of the Calgary office to better service WestJet about a year ago, the Vancouver office will do the same for longtime client, Telus. "We're going to hire locally," says Guenette about staff-up plans. At press time, Guenette would only say that an offer has been made to fill the CD position. **Bill Lisowsky** will be MD for both the Calgary and Vancouver offices.

And in true West Coast fashion, a café as well as a retail storefront are being considered to build the brand beyond the agency, says Guenette. In other Taxi news, **Trent Burton** and **Keli Pollock**, formerly with Calgary-based

Wax Partnership, have joined Taxi Calgary as co-CDs. They were winners of a One Show Gold Pencil this year for their work on Wax's corporate campaign.

Ogilvy Toronto has nabbed Taxi's **Jane Murray** as associate CD. She will be partnered with art director **Ivan Pols** who was deputy CD at Ogilvy Johannesburg and comes to Ogilvy Toronto as associate CD. The team will work on the agency's coveted Dove account, in addition to Hellmann's, Shredded Wheat and Timex. Murray was at Taxi for five years, working on marquee clients including Mini and Reitmans. While in South Africa, Pols worked on Audi and Motorola to name a few.

AGENCIES

APPOINTMENT NOTICE

Wendy Morrison, Conference Producer

Claire Macdonald, publisher of *strategy* and *Media in Canada*, is very pleased to announce that Wendy Morrison has joined the brands as conference producer.

Wendy has far-ranging experience in events and marketing, including stints as the director of sales and marketing at Second City; director of client service at Communique; show director at the Mariposa Group; and gala chair of the Marketing Hall of Legends. Most recently she was the marketing manager at BrandTrust.

Her first production will be the Agency of the Year Awards on November 23rd.

To contact Wendy: 416.408.2300 ext. 307

wmorrison@brunico.com

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IS VIRGIN MISSING OUT?

◀ By Annette Bourdeau ▶

Nobody can serve you better
than Virgin.

The mobile co's fall campaign, by Toronto-based Zig, aims to cement its positioning as the country's service leader. "For us, it's about staking claim as the customer service champion in this market," explains Nathan Rosenberg, CMO at Toronto-based Virgin Mobile Canada, adding that the broad target is 18-34, with mid-twentysomethings the sweet spot. "We're ahead of expectations – we're certainly tracking very well."

Two 30-second TV spots illustrate the potential hazards of dealing with other mobile carriers. For example, one spot features a twentysomething guy trying to deal with an automated customer service phone call.

The campaign also includes OOH, print and packaging efforts, and is running throughout the fall.

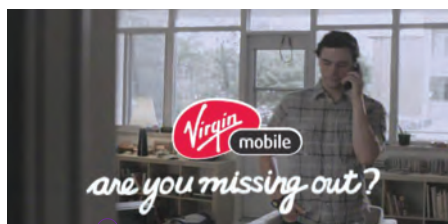
We asked Frank Palmer, chairman/CEO of Vancouver-based DDB Canada, and Paulette Arseneault, partner/CCO at Montreal-based PALM Arnold, to weigh in on whether Virgin misses out or scores big with this campaign.



PRINT

FP: This is making the best use of the visuals for me. It captures your attention and makes you want to know more. It capitalizes on using the colour red as it strongly represents Virgin.

PA: The red silhouette with its arms spread open across the double page spread conveys very effectively that Virgin Mobile has humans waiting for your call throughout the country. Simple and clear.



TV

FP: It's not badly done, but the premise should have been directed to the terrible service you get from phoning a credit card company, bank or airline. I don't remember the last time I was put on hold by a mobile phone carrier. There is a smile in the commercials but if they meant to be funny they missed the target.

PA: Sure to hit a sensitive spot with competitors' dissatisfied customers. Spots are clear and well-produced in both languages. I don't feel the "translation." Once more, good but not hilarious or irreverent like before. Has Virgin Mobile been tamed?

CONCEPT

FP: The title, "Are you missing out?" is well-named as there was a "missed opportunity" to create something worthwhile for such a cachet brand. It's obvious to me that Sir Richard probably never saw or approved it. All the creative people I know would kill to work with a client like Virgin.

PA: Overall, I like this campaign. It is clear, friendly, human. But it feels less edgy than [Virgin's] previous campaigns. Less irreverent, less Virgin. They must be trying to appeal to a larger crowd, I presume.

OOH

FP: It really scares me. I first saw the bus shelters and I truly wondered what the message was. I realize that I'm getting older but I just don't get the cut and paste graphics. The Virgin Mobile brand is hip and youthful and the outdoor doesn't cut it for me.

PA: When I first saw the red icons, I was attracted to them. The handwritten signature is very informal, human, almost buddy-buddy. Good choice of colour and font. Stands out from the rest of the pack. Good but a little dry, no humour.

PACKAGING

FP: The packaging for me nailed it. Simple and direct. I get it.

PA: Good, clean, inexpensive-looking, un-corporate. Perfect for Virgin.



The creds

Client – Virgin Mobile Canada

Nathan Rosenberg, CMO; Andrew Bridge, director, brand; Jason McPhail, manager, brand

Ad agency – Zig

Martin Beauvais, CD; Michael Murray, copywriter; Jason Hill, AD; Michelle Donnelly, Genevieve Beharry, designers; Dave Medlock, agency producer

Media strategist – Wills and Co.

Jeff Wills, president

OUTSTANDING NEW CAMPAIGNS

◀ By Annette Bourdeau ▶



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ACCOUNTANTS

B2B GETS ITS GAME ON

While the stereotypical bean counters may not have been picked first in gym class, the latest campaign from the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants positions accountants as potential star players for your business team.

Campaign creative, by Cossette B2B, features accountants in play-making moves for sports like soccer, basketball and baseball, with the tag: "CAs do so much more." The execution is visually impressive, and will likely stand out among typically bland B2B ads.

"Each of the sports illustrated is a team sport...the CA plays an important role on the business [team]," explains Daniel McMahon, chair of the CA profession branding committee. "We want to shift perceptions – we're providing a broad-based range of professional services."

A website, caadvantage.com, features case studies highlighting how CAs have helped companies beyond accounting by also assisting with leadership, business insight and strategic thinking.

"We are facing some new challenges," says McMahon. "There is increasing competition among financial designation in the marketplace."

The campaign is running across Canada in both English and French, and includes print, TV, online and OOH.

client: **Daniel McMahon, chair, CA profession branding committee**
agency: **Cossette B2B**
VP/CDs: **John Finn, Jim Garbutt, Roehl Sanchez**
client services: **Gillian Muise, Tammy Chiasson, Katie Beach, Dawn Whiteman**
director: **Patrick Solomon**
producer: **Kristen Wood**
sound: **The Eggplant**
media: **Katie Wolf, Jillian Wellard, Josee Otis**



They may have just robbed a bank, but at least they're driving safely.

"Especially with television, you have to go over the top [to get noticed]," says Darren Warner, CD at Vancouver-based Wasserman + Partners, explaining the zany concept that includes a TV spot with bank robbers making a careful getaway. On the print side, in addition to the toy-car-jumping stuntman, another execution features adults driving bumper cars in an orderly fashion.

All campaign elements, including TV, print and OOH, drive consumers to the website, zerocrashmonth.com, where both individuals and corporations can sign an online pledge to drive safely. Within a week of its launch at the beginning of October, there were already 15,000 individual pledges.

agency: **Wasserman + Partners**
CD: **Darren Warner**
copywriter: **Katherine MacDonald**
AD: **Lisa Lebedovich**

VP, strategic planning: **Karen Nishi**
account manager: **Shalini Shekhar**
agency producer: **Shelley Stevens**
prodco: **untitled/runt**
director: **Aleysa Young**
editor: **Don Macdonell, JMB Post**
sound: **GGRP**

Hall says the project was especially interesting for Arnold, since they're part of the target audience. He's confident that the ads will stand out from the competition. "It's interesting for suppliers – they tend not to do great ads. Which is odd, since they're advertising to people who are passionate about doing good advertising," he says. "Keen is a company that appreciates good advertising."

[illegible]

25

Everyone wants their 15 megs of fame

what's a brand to do?

◀ By Patti Summerfield ▶

CGM strategies: move from a planning mind-set of control to one of hopeful influence

It's a force to be reckoned with – and it's either a marketer's worst nightmare or their new best buddy. Whether it's called consumer-generated media (CGM) or user-generated content (UGC), it means the customer is no longer simply king, she is the publisher and broadcaster who controls the future of your brand and the judge and jury who delivers the verdict.

With blogs, chat rooms, podcasts, YouTube, and a myriad of social networking such as MySpace in the mix, CGM is stealing fire from traditional media and ads.

Until recently, marketers have shied away from CGM because they had no control over content that was often racy – and while everyone has the utmost confidence in their brand, it doesn't always extend to what the great unwashed might say about it online.

Obviously that was a problem for some of the sites as well. Even with its immense following, video-sharing site YouTube had a hard time attracting ads. It found a solution to some of the unease when it countered copyright concerns in early October by signing an agreement with CBS, Showtime and CSTV



"You cannot ignore the consumer-generated revolution. This is not five people peer-to-peer sharing, it has a mass momentum that is unstoppable," says Paul Woolmington, founding partner of Naked Communications of NYC. "Marketers think they're in control because they're creating advertising and pushing it out to consumers. But that same consumer could be writing a blog about a product. So are the marketers in control? No."

Woolmington explains it as everyone still wanting their 15 minutes of fame – only now repackaged as their 15 megs of fame.

Enter almost any major brand name into a search

engine and you get a list of thousands, or even millions, of sites – only a fraction of which are controlled by the brand in question. Enter a brand name and the word "blogs" and you will find out how the public truly feels about your product.

So how can a marketer hitch a ride on this wave? One route is the quasi-CGM model, wherein brands invite consumers to co-create but attempt to have some control parameters on the participation. Companies such as Coca-Cola, American Express, Levi's and McDonald's have invited online video and photo submissions as part of contests. In Canada, Unilever has just invited consumers

Even though it was said not to be a marketing ploy, the whole YouTube/LonelyGirl15 fiasco went down the tubes because it was staged

Networks in the U.S. to host their video clips and split the ad revenue. YouTube has a similar deal with Sony BMG and Universal Music

Group for music videos. This is all good news for Google, which bought YouTube last month for more than US\$1.6 billion.

to “Be Famous For Your Food” by submitting their recipes online for cooking with Hellmann’s mayonnaise for a chance to be profiled in one of its TV commercials.

Although the global Hellmann’s account was consolidated with Ogilvy & Mather New York in June, the “Be Famous For Your Food” campaign was conceived and created by Zig in Toronto. Shelley Brown, director of strategic planning for the agency, says the decision to invite consumers to participate came out of the “Be Famous For Your Food” creative idea.

“The strategy we were pursuing was to get people to look at Hellmann’s not simply as something they put on their food but as something to cook with. On a small scale, it’s to make your friends appreciate your cooking and that led us to the next level, making people famous in a bigger way and letting them



EepyBird prompted both Coke and Mentos to welcome UGC

be known to everybody as someone who can really cook.”

Another safety-driven strategy is the corporate blog. About 6% of Fortune 500 companies are currently writing blogs says Sean Moffitt, founder of Toronto WOM marketing company Agent Wildfire Strategy & Communications, mostly tech and electronics cos. General Motors, Microsoft, and several other tech firms, including Sun Microsystems, are involved in blogging through their own sites to build relationships with their consumers.

Of the more than 68 million hits you get when searching for Microsoft blogs, thousands of them are Microsoft-sanctioned at microsoft.com/communities/blogs where employees are encouraged to post blogs about the company’s technology and software. These blogs act as a counterweight to the truckload

CONSUMER-GENERATED LIVE DM

Sean Moffitt, founder of Toronto WOM marketing company Agent Wildfire Strategy & Communications, is in the buzz biz. He posts his musings in his own blog called BuzzCanuck (<http://buzzcanuck.typepad.com/agentwildfire>) and Agent Wildfire also recently launched several social networking communities called The Influencers (theinfluencers.ca). These sites are UGC but Agent Wildfire recruits Influencers or early adopters from within the groups



Brothers and Sisters was one of the shows *The Influencers* discussed

to help seed a client’s brand into a specific community of interest. Other than feedback points redeemable for charity contributions, none of the participants on Influencers sites or in any of the WOM campaigns are paid.

Global TV worked with Agent Wildfire to create some buzz about two of its new shows, *Brothers and*

Sisters and *Shark*, using a WOM technique that is consumer-generated but still gives the marketer control. It can be described as consumer-generated live DM either face-to-face, on the phone, or online.

The 12-week campaign began with 2,000 TV enthusiasts in Toronto and Vancouver being recruited on theinfluencers.ca hub. They were sent an advance DVD of the shows, along with a handbook containing interesting factoids, and background on the actors. Participants were encouraged to read the handbook, come to their own conclusions about whether the shows merited their advocacy, talk to their friends about the shows, and then send feedback about the conversations to Agent Wildfire.

At press time, four weeks into the campaign, Moffitt says the shows received high ratings from *The Influencers*, and thousands of referral conversations have taken place. Feedback is ongoing and three polls will be conducted with the participants over the 12 weeks.

Moffitt says: “If you hated the show, you’re free to talk about it. All we want is feedback on how the WOM actually happened so we can give our clients feedback.”

Currently Agent Wildfire has six Influencer communities covering entertainment, fashion, food and drink, shopping, technology and gadgets, and trends. Another 12 are on tap for 2007 to focus on sports, automotive, books, business, home, family, music, health/beauty/fitness, nightlife, gaming, travel and urban life. **PS**

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ZenithOptimedia, the ROI agency is part of Publicis Group Media, the world’s 2nd largest media conglomerate.



GM execs from around the world contribute blogs

of less-than-flattering UGC that is out there, and give readers a sense of community along with tips, inside info and sneak peaks at upcoming products. Visitors can also interact with the bloggers and download beta test versions of new software.

Over at General Motors, which has the corporate blog with the highest traffic (no pun intended), GM execs from around the world – including Bob Lutz, GM vice-chairman – wax

poetic on topics such as NASCAR racing, new car design, and the Paris auto show at fastlane.gmblogs.com.

When it comes to blogs, marketers need to be upfront about who they are or risk alienating consumers, Woolmington says. Rather than having a copywriter or employee infiltrate the blog, recruit from the core audience, don't use marketing jargon, and contribute to the conversation rather than interrupting it. For one of Naked's clients, the shop is going to take a slightly different tack in a number of blogs around different communities of interest.

Woolmington says: "We've identified that the competitor has very obviously been blogging on sites, but faking it and has been called out a number of times. What we're going to do is go in and be honest about who we are – and start calling the competitor out on it.

We're going to do it in a very humorous way and with a very simple message. It's an interesting concept and I think it will be very authentic."

Wal-Mart is one marketer who can attest to the need to be genuine. Last month, Wal-Mart USA closed down The Hub (schoolyourway.walmart.com) saying it was simply a short-term back-to-school effort

although the fact that the social-networking site targeting kids and tweens was labeled a loser right out of the gate likely influenced the decision. Its problem was profiles of teenyboppers enthusing about Wal-Mart product did not come across as authentic. Undeterred, Wal-Mart misfired once again with a blog launched at the end of September called Wal-Marting Across America. The supposed chronicles of an average couple traveling across the country in their RV was exposed as a promotional tactic featuring journalists hired by the retailer's PR firm.

It's the true UGC blogs that will make even the most cynical believe there is something powerful in all of this, says Moffitt, pointing to sites like positivefanatics.com, about Ikea, and starbuckseverywhere.net, by a guy who has gone to 3,000 Starbucks around the world.

In Canada, one of the busiest blogs is a photo-sharing site called DailyDoseofImagery (wvs.toleftpixel.com) run by a Toronto-based photographer who posts one photo chronicling his experience each day. The blogger has no brand stance although it is sponsored by consumer electronics site DigitalAdvisor.com and camera site DigitalCamera-HQ.com.

Tapping into the enthusiast crowd and giving them a place to congregate is a smart move for brands that have the right following. Examples

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For what matters.

include group or club sites such as the Savvy Reader program from book publisher Harper Collins (harpercollins.ca) or the Running Room, a retailer with a community-based site (runningroom.com) that boasts about 225,000 subscribers across Canada.

On the flip side are the unruly masses who are roaming unfettered through the Internet,

Since then every brand wants to go viral, says Kevin Hung, IP manager at Starcom Worldwide in Toronto, but it's the public not a marketer that decides what is worthy of that type of widespread attention. He says he would consider using CGM for a client as a tactical effort but it would be a measured risk since you can only influence, not dictate.

Hung says: "Even though it was said not to be a marketing ploy, the whole YouTube/LonelyGirl15 fiasco went down the tubes because it was staged; the editing was beyond perfect. That was a ploy that had promise in my opinion. I really believe if you can find the insight or passion that is not just surface level,

clients shouldn't jump into it until they assess whether it's the right place for the brand or where they'll find their target consumers.

Fairbairn places ads in text blogs such as ittoolbox.com for U.S. client Covad Communications, a provider of business broadband networks and VoIP services, but is currently looking at getting Covad set up with its own blog. He's also talking to FreshFeed – a company that aggregates content and then sends it out to blogging communities and sites with press feeds – about getting Covad product news out to interested consumers.

People research products and services online and the information they respect the most comes from their peers, says Fairbairn. "If I'm an IT guy, I'm going to listen to another IT guy before I listen to pcmagazine.com. There's real value in getting UGC tied to your brand."

He has mixed feelings about advertisers crossing the line and violating the whole open premise of video-sharing and social networking sites. He doesn't think any advertisers have been successful at trying to be part of any unpaid content so far. For example, on MySpace.com where users have a home page and post their personal profiles and interests, Fairbairn says some movies prior to release are creating their own profiles and showing video trailers. Musicians are also doing it but, he says, so are pornographers to promote their sex sites.

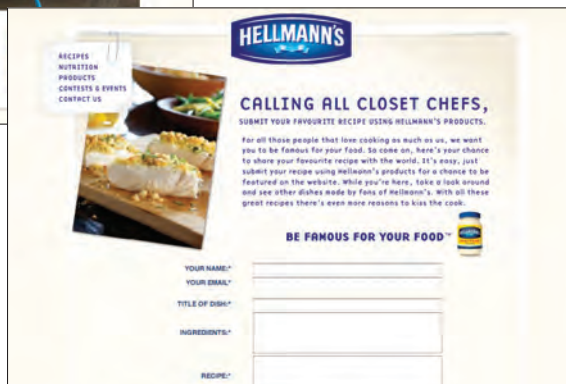
"If you're a brand like Disney, you don't want to be around too much CGM because you don't want the Disney name to be around content that is unmonitored."

"Blogging is peer-to-peer content, user generated. If you see a company generate it, you think they're taking advantage of new technology to get their name out there free. But sometimes these blogs work perfectly for what an advertiser is trying to get across. It will create a viral effect, and create response."

So, CGM presents a perfect dilemma for marketers – if you dabble in this space you could garner Subservient Chicken-grade buzz, or you could be damned thoroughly if you do it badly, and possibly damned even if you don't. ■



Hellmann's cooked up an online contest to encourage folks to create recipes for them



messing with your IP, playing mash-up with your brand, and developing new uses for your core assets – sometimes for good, sometimes for evil. While instinct dictates leaping into damage control mode when it's the latter, and milking it when it's the former, it is again a question of influence, not control, and ideally, a chance to learn.

Earlier this year the Extreme Diet Coke & Mentos Experiment (eepybird.com/dcm1.html), showing the artistic rocketing results of combining 200 litres of Diet Coke and 523 Mentos mints, was viewed on computers around the world. It has inspired thousands of copycat postings (roughly 5,000 of them on YouTube) and prompted both Mentos (us.mentos.com) and Coca-Cola (coke.com, cocacola.com, mycoke.com) to enter the UGC arena and solicit and post videos from the public.

that's when things become a lot more viral."

Even if they're not going to blog or advertise on a video-sharing site, Hung says marketers must monitor what's going on for themselves. "If there's a site with a whole section dedicated to 'I hate XYZ product,' that marketing manager should be looking at those sites to find out what's wrong with the product – and why. It's free marketing research. You don't have to take the traditional route because people are volunteering all that information for free."

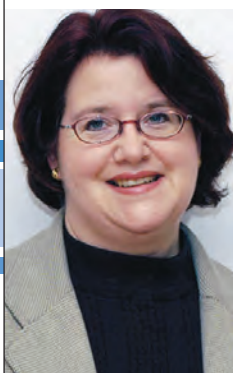
UGC and the like all sound like pretty sexy technology but Nick Fairbairn, media engagement strategist for Toronto-based GJP Advertising in San Francisco, cautions that

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COSYING UP TO SHOPPERS

To really get the consumer's POV – and gain a competitive edge – talk face-to-face

◀ By Lisa D'Innocenzo ▶

Just because your consumer says he'll go out of his way to buy Ruffles doesn't mean he will. And as more companies realize this disconnect between thought and deed, many are now going beyond traditional research methods in an effort to truly get into the shopper headspace.

The likes of Frito-Lay, Coca-Cola and HP are implementing in-store research programs that bring marketers and other employees up close and personal with shoppers. The benefit? Along with sales increases, they're finding they can gain leverage with retailers and build stronger relationships with consumers.

Marc Guay, president of Mississauga, Ont.-based Frito-Lay Canada, believes in-store research is crucial because "the point of purchase is very complicated. There's the consumer, and then there's the shopper. What consumers tell you when you conduct surveys isn't necessarily what you observe in the store."

Along with regular in-store intercepts, a couple of years ago the firm placed GPS devices on grocery carts to determine shopping patterns and hot spots. Frito-Lay then "translated that information into actionable game plans to go to



Coke honchos Silvio Annosantini and Udayan Jatar observe consumers at the bev giant's new concept store

our retail partners and implement merchandising tactics that responded to those findings," he says.

One of the learnings was that consumers spend a lot less time in the store than they used

to, and a lot less time in the aisles. "So being on the perimeter of the store is certainly something we strive for," says Guay, who points to in-store promos such as an annual Superbowl campaign wherein Frito-Lay and Pepsi team up to create an attention-getting experience involving carpets that resemble a football field and goal posts. Retailers like it, says Guay, because January is slow and they want to add excitement.

According to Luke Sklar, partner of Toronto-based marketing consultancy Sklar, Wilton & Associates, the dramatically consolidated retail environment is a big factor in the decision to cosy up to consumers. Sklar, who counts Heinz, Maple Leaf and Smuckers as clients, says studying shopper behaviour is critical not only to gain a true understanding of the consumer, but also to help strengthen relationships with customers (a.k.a. retailers.) "Loblaws doesn't really care about Heinz ketchup. The only way we can make them care is to give them smart thinking that makes them more money. [You need to] go to them and say: 'You know, if you actually put the display here or if you put a double posting there, you will raise your basket by x dollars.'"

The main way to deliver smart thinking is through observing shoppers in their habitat. "Retail is a visual, sensory business that you cannot understand unless you see people feel, touch and view," says Sklar. "You need to get into the moment of truth because that is where the decision to spend money is made and people can't [articulate the decision-making process.]"

Observational methods, he adds, can either

ASK AN EXPERT

Why now?

Alan Kay, a marketing consultant and president of Toronto-based The Glasgow Group, says one of the reasons more companies are interested in one-on-one dialogue with consumers is that commoditization has increased the importance of customer experience. In fact, he says, customer experience must now be differentiated to gain a competitive edge.

While Kay says traditional research is still very important to help identify what kind of experience people want, "to be able to convert that research knowledge into insight and action you need to go one step further, which is to bring the customer into contact with your organization. That allows your management to make the kind of decisions the customer wants, and allows the customer to see that the organization, the brand, is actually listening."

Doing so, he says, can help a company establish customer loyalty, but it's also the price of admission nowadays, because of the Starbucks of the world, which have excelled in the customer experience arena. While "it's hard for established organizations [to create that structure] they have to find something that captures a Starbucks-like approach – and the way to do that is to talk to customers directly." Kay says the idea of interaction with consumers began with the Internet, which facilitated a more intimate dialogue, but that companies are now pushing such tactics further.

"Managers have so much information at their fingertips, it's hard to make decisions without getting closer to the customer," he explains.





Frito-Lay, Pepsi team for Superbowl promo designed to banish the January blahs be quantitative or qualitative. So time-lapse photography studying traffic flow can help determine shopping patterns. Qualitative research, on the other hand, involves walking people through the store to see if key focal points actually evoke the responses desired.

While Sklar maintains that “most [CPGs] have been wonderful at consumer understanding, but not as strong at shopper understanding,” he says these in-store research methods, previously rare, are now more common. “In a country with pressure-disposable income like Canada, with cost pressures and the over-stored retail market, shopper research is a wedge to be smarter, to get everyone to make a little bit more money.”

Coca-Cola took in-store research one step further when it introduced a concept store in Toronto’s trendy Yorkville in September to act as a valuable tool for gauging consumer feedback. The store houses the soft drink giant’s new coffee brands, Far Coast and Chaqwa – its play to take a bite out of the lucrative \$5.2 billion (including café and grocery store sales) java market. Concept stores are also opening in Norway and Singapore. While the location of the store here may seem odd, it actually makes sense when you consider that the Far Coast line targets more upscale clients like Windsor Arms and Yorkville’s trendy restaurant Flow. (Meanwhile, Chaqwa is going after gas stations and movie theatres.)

The store’s purpose is to generate consumer insights, according to Coke, which emphasizes that it’s not going after Starbucks or Tim Hortons, nor is it getting into the retail business. “We are fundamentally not competing with coffee houses,” says Udaiyan Jatar, premium brewed beverages GM at Atlanta-based Coca-Cola Company. “The concept store is really a marketing tool...it’s part of our full-learning plan,” explains Silvio Annosantini, premium brewed beverages business development director, Coca-Cola Canada.

Non-CPG companies also see value in cosying up to shoppers. Mississauga, Ont.-based HP Canada recently wrapped its Demo Days, when employees spent a half-day in Best Buy stores getting a glimpse of how overwhelming the consumer electronics retail experience can be. Everyone from the leadership team to members of the marketing,

Launch day.

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In Demo Days, HP employees such as President and CEO Paul Tsaparis (far right), worked at Best Buy and got to see what the customer experience was like

finance and call centre departments were invited to participate.

Says Lynn Anderson, VP of marketing and strategic alliances: "It's a really good opportunity to...[help employees] understand from the customer's point of view what the whole experience is around the purchase and the take home of an HP product."

And the Demo Days (first tested two years ago before being rolled out nationally this year) help build customer loyalty, she says. "You can put a face to the company when the customer is making that purchase decision, and because your products are being sold through a channel, this is an opportunity for them to build a rapport directly with HP."

"Many consumers, when they are walking in, have not determined which brand may be the one they are ultimately going to select – so this gives you an opportunity in the purchasing process to state your benefits and bring them over to your solution."

While HP will compare sales in participating Best Buy locations during Demo Days versus a similar period to gauge success, there are other benefits to the program, says Anderson. "I talked to about 10 people who were coming to HP because they'd had a really bad experience with a competitor – and they were very clear about where the competitor fell down, which is great, because it reaffirms your value proposition does ring true, or [you realize] 'Hey, do you guys know that the one thing we have taken for granted we should really be pushing?'"

Marketing consultant Alan Kay's advice is not to get in over your heads when it comes to implementing marketing strategies that are based on research born of close customer contact. "Don't try to change everything," advises the president of Toronto's The Glasgow Group. "Just change a few things that matter to the customer." ■

With files from Annette Bourdeau and Mary Maddever.

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WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU AGAIN NEXT YEAR!



Your number here

◀ By Annette Bourdeau ▶

No website? Montreal-based Yellow Pages Group (YPG) can help you out. It now offers merchant profiles on its online directory site, yellowpages.ca, using repurposed info from ads in its hard copy edition and online ads. The pages each have unique URLs based on the merchant's phone number.

"The majority of our advertisers don't have a website yet," explains Jean-Pascal Lion, YPG's VP marketing, adding that the more ad space you buy in the book, the more info you'll get on your merchant's page. "The beauty of the page is that it's static, so it's easy to be indexed in search engines."



A simpler home interface has likely helped increase traffic to the relaunched site

And, since late August, yellowpages.ca has featured a new, simpler home interface with just two search boxes (instead of having to fill out various search fields), to better appeal to users who have grown accustomed to searching for things with über-simple Google. The ad campaign supporting the relaunch positions the site as "the find engine."

Lion says web traffic has gone up since the redesign by Montreal-based interactive agency Revolver 3.

YPG is now working on developing a keyword-buy system that's very similar to Google's AdSense. Lion says that will likely be offered within the next year. ■

TWO-FACED STOREFRONTS

New technology enables interactive, daylight-visible window projections

Thanks to new "Window F/X" technology imported from Europe, Boombox Marketing's OptiAd Media division has begun transforming store windows into screen ads for featured products. Almost like holograms, the ads are invisible from inside but eye-catching for passersby 24/7, even in bright sunlight.

"Home builders, for instance, can run virtual tours of the residences they're selling on the windows of their sales centres, even when they're closed," explains Michael Dellios, VP at Toronto-based OptiAd Media (optiadm.com), adding that touchscreen capabilities allow potential

customers to window "surf" whether a store is open or closed.

OptiAd, which can develop and update the creative, recently set up Window F/X at a Mini sales centre on Toronto's trendy King Street West and



at uptown Toronto kids store Nestings. Also, Toronto-based Labatt Breweries of Canada has commissioned several on-premise Window F/X installations.

Dellios says the new technology is customizable "up to windows as big as 50 ft. by 10 ft.," and is compatible with flash animation, DVD and live-feed video. There's no bulky hardware, and the screens don't block sunlight or the visibility of storefront products. For companies with more storefront space than they need to showcase their own wares, OptiAd will broker deals with other advertisers to turn unused windows into ad revenue. *By Terry Poulton with files from AB*

LESS IS MORE

Tiny menus save space, postage costs and stick around

What's three-and-a-half inches tall, two inches wide and glossy all over? It could be your menu, if you get it printed with Toronto-based High Visibility.

The company, which prints millions of pocket-sized brochures and menus yearly, is currently figuring out how to facilitate a multi-menu DM co-op for postal codes in the Toronto area.

"Because of their size, we can group mail the MiniMenus in a small envelope for certain postal codes," explains Emil Glassbourg, High Visibility's owner. "From six to 10 [restaurants per area] would make it viable. It could go out to 10,000 homes." He can offer cuisine category exclusivity, and expects to be able to start testing the program in the next year.

Glassbourg has recently started offering MiniMenus with magnets on the back, so consumers can keep them on their fridges for easy access.

"You don't even realize it's a menu until you open it up...for the people who see it for the first time, it's a novel thing," says client Vince Momoliti, GM at Toronto restaurant Terroni. "It does have that wow factor, but in the end, it works."

Restaurant owners are looking at about \$1,500 per 10,000 Magnetic MiniMenus. For an extra \$300 per month, Glassbourg offers shelf space in the mini-brochure displays he has at about 70 major hotels around Toronto.

Glassbourg is still looking for restaurants to sign on for the Toronto-area DM effort. Prices will vary depending on the number of participants. **AB**



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RETAIL REIGNS

◀ By Natalia Williams ▶

OVERALL BRAND OF THE YEAR



FINALIST



FINALIST



This year, selecting one brand per category seemed a tad narrowminded, especially with the retail landscape gearing up to become a scrappier fisticuffs than a Boxing Day sale

As we looked closer, we couldn't help but notice that there was more than just one retail brand getting it really right. They were strong creatively, innovative, had bold vision and clear business prowess – all the criteria we look for when crowning the Brand of the Year. "In general, there are more retailers understanding the power brand as a way to build business and build relationships. Definitely," agrees longtime retail analyst John Torella of Toronto-based JC Williams Group.

So, we're calling this the year of the retailer, and while we've selected one to wear the Brand of the Year crown, we also give massive kudos to those in the industry who are truly, deeply, and convincingly getting it right.

WE ♥ SHOPPERS

What's not to love about a store that dares to offer an experience?



After *Glow*: A series of three successful magazines, including *Glow Health* and *Teen Glow*, were the result of data from gold mine Optimum

It's okay to envy Shoppers Drug Mart. They've earned it.

Over the past few years, the over 40 year-old brand with more than 925 stores across the country has gone from functional to fabulous. The most noticeable shift: replacing crammed, uninteresting stores with airy, bright, gorgeous spaces punctuated by aisles stocked with merchandise that you could spend hours indulging in. Yes, the last dash of whimsy was intentional.

Because what Shoppers has managed to do – and why it gets our nod as the Brand of the Year – is transform picking up a prescription into something verging on reverie – and we suggest, in the process, helping redefine the Canadian shopping experience.

from blocks away. The stores are going to be triple and sometimes quadruple the size they used to be – and we're going to get really good in a handful of categories," he says, in addition to its pharmacy, beauty, private label products and convenient food.

Customers and patients know our brand and frequent our stores and with 1,000 outlets and close to one million transactions a day, we are our own medium

With the glammed-up in-store experience has come a deliberate move away from mass marketing.

"Mass marketing is old fashioned, inefficient and expensive," says chairman/CEO Glenn Murphy. "It's more suited to mass retailers. Customers and patients know our brand and frequent our stores, and with 1,000 outlets and close to one million transactions a day, we are our own medium."

Indeed, a Shoppers store *is* a medium, and it's a strategy that has worked incredibly well, says Chris Lund, CEO of retail strategy consultant Perennial, which helped orchestrate the new vision.

"Their big strategy shift is away from mass market to saying: 'Our stores are where we're going to build our brand,'" says Lund. "We're going to build large, fabulous stores, where people can see the iconography and the façade

The extreme makeover started in 2001 with the arrival of Murphy to the top spot. Since, not only has the turnaround included bigger and better-designed locations, but better merchandise, a strong push on high-end cosmetics and greater investment into the brand's private label products. (Penetration is "north of 13%," says Murphy, and in late 2004 it was 12%.)

It's an effort, in these times of retail cross-pollination, which has positioned the company to take on the likes of Wal-Mart and, coincidentally, Loblaw, which was Murphy's old stomping grounds for 14 years.

"The other secret to their success is a major strategic transformation away from mass advertising where they were spending a fortune – [to] advertising messaging around things they think are relevant consumer positioning," says Lund. "So they advertise their

How to reach the ultimate consumers WOMEN

Women account for 80% of all household spending.

Every marketer knows that.

What they don't always know is how to target and engage the umpteen kinds of female consumers, from stay-at-home moms to power execs. That's where *strategy's* January, 2006 supplement comes in. We'll offer insight into trends, connectivity and a host of other areas with one goal in mind: To educate readers on how to build market share among Canada's most powerful consumer segment.

This is a highly targeted opportunity for women's media properties, agencies and research companies to strut their stuff through case studies and provide conclusive evidence that their approach will deliver results.

Deadline to participate is November 16th

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Above: Expect more big, bold, beautiful stores. Right: Murphy hopes the chain's private label brand, Life, will reach 20% penetration

points program and things going on around Optimum. That's their unique offering in the marketplace and something that is worth celebrating."

In fact, while speaking at Scotia Capital's 10th annual Back to School Conference titled, "Focus on the Consumer" in September, Murphy said the brand will become even more of a niche marketer. "We've pulled out the weekly flyer [which goes to 9.3 million households] and have been testing, using the Optimum card data, to create something brand new," a 24-page booklet with a lifespan of about three weeks based not on timelines, but on the psychology of how people shop. Market research began in Saskatoon, Sask. and London, Ont. this summer. How golden is the Optimum data? The seven-year-old program, which now touts about 7.6 million mainly female active users, was used, for example, to launch the brand's very successful line of magazines: first *Glow*, and in the past two years *Teen Glow* and *Glow Health*.

But the brand is on the prowl for more users. Starting in Quebec this fall, and rolling out across Canada in 2007, a personalized card – with the user's name – will be introduced.

"The goal is...to market to people based on what they're thinking," said Murphy in his speech. "So, in a three-week period, there would be a 600,000 person drop on babies, depending on who [needs it], based on their purchase habits and lifestyle. So you can launch a macro, three-to-four week marketing program

and supplement with direct mail depending on your purchase habits and where you are at that moment in your life."

JC Willams Group's retail analyst John Torella is taken by the smarts behind the program. "It has [put them] in a leadership position," he says. "And the way that they have converted that to advocacy and traffic and intent to purchase, I think are all very innovative – and that's in addition to outstanding financial performance."

Second quarter results released in early October revealed same-store sales growth of 7%. Fiscal sales over 2005 were \$7.2 billion and the company has been enjoying solid single-digit sales increases since Murphy joined in 2001.

Now plans are in the works to open a maximum of 300 new stores over the next five years, with most being between 12,000 and 14,000 sq. ft. and up. Today the average store is 8,300 sq. ft. It's part of an aggressive real estate strategy that currently sees 35% of its stores over 10,000 sq. ft. and plans to



invest in revamping about 450 of the other stores. (Murphy has said that they're not sure if the remaining 200 are worth expanding.) "Their move into these larger store formats, where they're going to move into pick-up and occasional food in a big way, is a very insightful way to leverage their traffic," says Torella.

And expect the momentum to continue. In September they announced the hire of Jurgen Schreiber as president/COO. A former CEO of European operations of A.S. Watson, one of the world's largest health and beauty retailers with more than 4,000 stores, analysts expect Schreiber to

usher the company to the next level. The rumblings have also begun that he may just be the man to spearhead expansion south of the border as he was responsible for A.S. Watson's lofty acquisitions and also helped it significantly grow its cosmetics and fragrance business.

"I think he's going to mean more depth in businesses they're just entering," Lund suggests. "What I like about him is he has really good experience in international markets. So when you look at things like cosmetics, when you look at categories like general merchandise, he has global experience with the Unilevers, with the [Estée] Lauders, access to Asian, South American, Western European markets. I think that will mean a lot for Shoppers as they continue to continue to throw gasoline on this fire that they've built."

He adds: "I'm hopeful for them that he will be Dave Nichol-esque, as in I've traveled the world, and here are some really interesting products I want to bring into the Life Brand. I think that would be wonderful for Shoppers."

Coincidentally (or not) on the heels of the Schreiber announcement came news that Shoppers has made some serious inroads into the coveted prestige cosmetics arena, inking at long-term deal with Clinique to sell its products in the chain's Beauty Boutiques. In the past 12 months, 35 new Beauty Boutiques were added. There are now 100. In 2002, the company had deals with 15 prestige brands, now, it's 34. With it, their share of the market has jumped to 15% from 5% four years ago.

"They have materially taken the momentum away from department stores and even some specialty stores that used to be very strong in cosmetics," says Lund.

"I don't know a female who doesn't view a Shoppers Drug Mart the way some men view Canadian Tire."

BIG BRAND LOVE

Since brands increasingly live in a 'ME'diverse, with less mass and more narrowly etched niche consumer groups, *strategy* decided to get the WOM perspective on Brand of the Year. And who better to wax deeply about a brand than the folks who build them? Herewith a male and a female marketer, one from Vancouver and the other from outside Toronto share their "Brands of the Year" – ones they not only admire professionally, but, it seems, that they simply can't live without.

Why Google is like Kleenex



Marc Belcourt
Brand Communications
Manager, BMW Canada
Whitby, Ont.

When you first discovered it:
I first discovered Google in the late '90s. I heard of it through friends. It delivered the results my friends said it would. It [then] became my starting point for any search.

From a marketing perspective, why its branding works:

Quite simply, everyone understands what Google is. The fascinating aspect for me is that I can't recall a single television ad, print ad or any other form of advertising enticing me to use Google. It has been able to survive on word of mouth. It meets, if not exceeds, the expectations of its users and ultimately, delivers on its promise.

It has an unusual name which can be adopted and recognized by people from any culture. Those who use it, benefit from it. This generates return visits. Return visits create loyalty. Loyalty creates positive word of mouth. Positive word of mouth creates mass promotion. Intense promotion creates a billion dollar business. This produces a brand with the ability to transcend any demographic in any country around the world. Add it all up and you have a brand as strong as or stronger than the oldest of blue chip companies.

And amazingly, Google officially launched in 1998.

Parting thoughts:

Google is a part of our life. It has become what Kleenex is to paper tissues in a fraction of the time. I am a loyal user and I have welcomed the Google brand into my personal and professional life. Don't we all dream of having a brand like Google to own, work with or represent?

Let the Creatives
take the credit...

...or tears might
well up in their little
square glasses.



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CANADIAN IDOL

No, you're not mistaken – that fresh-faced brand is old-timer Canadian Tire



Taxi's campaign has "blown the doors off any norm," says Canadian Tire's Fellows

Take heed of Canadian Tire. Mid-last month, when the 84-year-old brand announced a move into banking, sure, it had been heavily researched

words are now prominently displayed in large, red letters in the bulk of its stores.

"The key was to reposition the store into digestible bites,

It was getting tougher and tougher for people to answer the question: 'What do you go to Canadian Tire for?'

for years, but it had the ballsy stride of a move executed by a nimble brand with a healthy ego, sure of its iconic status and coming off a stellar 12 months, complete with a glitzy campaign and some decent profits to match. Simply, now more than ever, one gets the impression that Canadian Tire is ready to rumble. Funny how that was hardly the case a little under 10 years ago.

"They had a little bit of The Bay phenomenon," says Chris Lund, CEO of retail strategy consultant, Perennial, which has worked with the brand for six years now. "There were in all these different categories, and it was getting tougher and tougher for people to answer the question: 'What do you go to Canadian Tire for?'"

Then, the response was rather limited: Auto parts and little else. "We looked at the store and said: 'There's another 70,000 sq. ft. of store where that guy hasn't even shopped. Why isn't he going into lighting? Or home décor?'"

Today, they go for four reasons: driving, living, playing and fixing. This has been the foundation of the sizable rejuvenation of the brand, and to underscore the point, the

thereby getting people to shop the entire store," Lund explains. "What it has done for Canadian Tire is that it gives these entrepreneurs [the stores in the chain are owned by what they call associate dealers] who are really in touch with the community, an opportunity to say, 'Come and revisit us; use your existing entry point, but we want you to shop the entire store.'"

And buoyed by solid numbers (in August, its second quarter retail earnings were up 5.35%; same store sales were 3.3%) plans were announced recently to step up the rollout of its larger-format stores, which range from 65,000 to 100,000 sq. ft.

They aim to have about 300 of its 464 stores conform to what they've dubbed the Concept 20/20 store model, which means the addition of 20% more floor space than a traditional location, by 2009. About 200 will involve retrofitting existing stores. The remaining 100 will be new locations found in bustling suburban areas and some downtown, much like the unexpected arrival in September of a Canadian Tire at Toronto's busy Bay and Dundas intersection.

"What we've done with Concept 20/20 [is offer] more space for our customers to browse," says Tracy Fellows, Canadian Tire's VP, consumer advertising and marketing. "It gives them clearer navigational signals. It inspires them because we can display products more broadly. The aisles are a lot wider and it's a lot friendlier, exciting and more inspiring a shopping experience." Merchandise offerings have also been spruced up – including the addition of the Debbie Travis line of products, for example – as part of an effort to attract the female consumer to the stores and completely discard its auto parts-only roots.

Retail analyst John Torella of the JC Williams Group applauds the new-look Canadian Tire. "[They have] really found a way to combine both brand and merchandise. And their current campaign does that in an innovative, creative way."

Yes, that little ad campaign by Toronto-based Taxi. "It is one of the key highlights [of the past 12 months]," says Fellows. "We're really pleased. It's been very successful for us." How much so? "The brand link [metric] – the customers' ability to relate the ad back to Canadian Tire – has just blown the doors off of any norm that's been out there with Ipsos Reid," she says.

So what does Torella predict is Canadian Tire's future? "Just accelerated growth," he says. "I think they've got it all together." Evidently, so do they.

FINALIST **CANADIAN TIRE**



The key was to reposition the store into digestible bites, thereby getting people to shop the entire store



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take the credit...

...honestly, they just
don't get to say "impactful"
often enough.



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HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS

With the renovation market worth at least \$28 billion, let the games begin



A strong push on being environmentally friendly – including the launch of a new magazine – is one way Home Depot plans to win the reno war

Canada's home renovation market is set to become a tad more snug. North Carolina-based retailer Lowe's recently broke ground in Hamilton for the first of an expected six to 10 locations to open in 2007. Is Home Depot Canada, perhaps its most direct competitor, batting an eye? Hardly.

Peg Hunter, the chain's new senior director of marketing, says: "Home Depot, more than any other competitor, has had the benefit of competition with them in the States."

It also has Annette Verschuren as president, a formidable retailer some call one of the smartest in the industry, who over her 12 years at the helm has earned the right to somewhat autonomously run the chain. "Annette brings a special perspective to the company," says retail analyst Wendy Evans of Toronto-based retail consultancy Evans and Company, crediting her with ensuring women are in top positions and introducing a successful female-friendly home fashion slant to the business.

An example is the *DreamBook*, a slick catalogue rivaling any décor magazine. Roughly 1.5 million copies are printed and mailed to households and found in-store. It has been clearly positioned to reach out to the female target as the stop for an entire project, not just products. The most recent issue landed on doorsteps in September.

Beyond women, the brand has successfully etched out unique target markets: the professional contractor, the do-it-yourselfer, and most recently the "We'll do it for you" target. These are people who want, for example, new kitchen cabinetry, but instead of

doing it themselves will hire one of the over 3,000 contractors in the Home Depot roster. [Hunter says it's definitely a growth area for the business.] To help promote

Canadian to make better choices for the environment.

Another element of this program is the splashy magazine, *Eco Options* (Annette Verschuren

Who's going to win? Let's just say that Home Depot is pretty aggressive

it, the brand teamed up with Mike Holmes, star of the popular HGTV show, *Holmes on Homes*.

The company's *Eco Options* is another area where it has managed to distinguish itself, says Evans. "It's a very strong program. They've taken a leadership role in that." Hunter says Home Depot actually aims to spur a "market transformation," one that encourages consumers to have a healthier relationship with the environment. And they're clearly serious about

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But real estate may be the area where the battle unfolds. While most retailers have plans to go big, part of this big box retailer's strategy is to downsize, searching out smaller locations, for example within malls. "[It's an effort to] capture more of the urban market," says Evans.

Evans suggests the big box retailers combined currently own about 50% market share of the home improvement market, which is estimated to be worth \$28 billion. The other half is still claimed by smaller shops. "Both Home Depot and Rona [say they plan to double their market share in the next five years]," she says. The competition, in addition to Lowe's, consists of the likes of Rona, Home Hardware and, in certain categories, Canadian Tire.

So if Evans were a betting woman, which retailer would she put her money on? "Who's going to win?" she repeats with a laugh. "Let's just say that Home Depot is pretty aggressive."



it: about 11,000 products (and growing) are now under the *Eco Options* banner – and in an interesting shift, more and more suppliers are approaching the company with ideas for new products. It's a result of the company's close partnership with Summerhill Group, a Toronto-based environmental consulting company which crafts programs that encourage the average

A Starbucks addict comes clean



Jennifer Shah,
Marketing Manager, Dish,
Playboy Jeans
Vancouver

What it means to you:

Starbucks is a great success story of how to make an international chain feel just like a local coffee shop. My local Starbucks is the first place that I've ever really been a

regular. The staff there know me, they know my husband, they know our dog. They write messages on my cup in the morning and give me presents on my birthday.

A strong supporter of helping out the little guy, I'm usually the last person to pick a chain over an independent, but the atmosphere and excellent customer relations (and of course great coffee) provide the intimacy that is so often absent from a large organization. My Starbucks even has a bulletin board to post [notices of] local garage sales, concerts, plays and lost and found – all this is in downtown Vancouver!

When you first discovered it:

I had my first latte when I was in university. I was just beginning my coffee addiction and this became a wonderful afternoon treat and great break from studying.

After graduating, I moved to the U.K. and Starbucks was my source for great coffee in the land of tea drinkers – my colleagues often commented on my "vat" of coffee (a "venti" to Starbucks aficionados).

How it impacts your daily existence:

Well, I'm a unique combination of coffee addict and coffee snob, so Starbucks to me is a necessary first step to getting my work day started off on the right foot. I refuse to drink horrid office coffee, so if I don't visit Starbucks I go without coffee – and let's just say that I never go without coffee.

From a marketing perspective, why its branding works:

Starbucks currently is one of the largest retailers of classical music in the world. Its HEAR Music series is an amazing way to sample different varieties of music and is a wonderful reprieve from the same six songs that seem to inhabit every radio station these days.

Starbucks also branched out into additional entertainment content with its involvement in the movie *Akeelah and the Bee*, as well as being a regular sponsor of local jazz and film festivals.

The branding and marketing encompass a higher class lifestyle that embodies a better you, a more celebrated you, a more cultured you; and all you have to do to join the club is buy a cup of coffee (although a slightly higher priced one).

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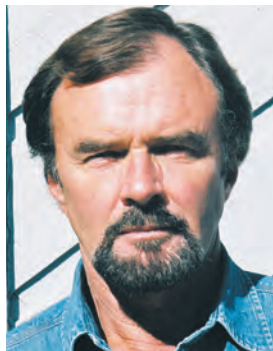


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◀ By Barry Base ▶

Plan for media, but create for mediums

Two thousand years ago, the Catholic Church determined that if you want people to believe something, *you gotta tell 'em every seven days.*

Later, Procter & Gamble decided the correct frequency was *three times a week.*

This is why we have media plans.

Because the damn human brain, with which we are still being issued two hundred thousand years after its shortcomings became *glaringly* apparent, dumps 85% of its short-term memory every 24 hours. That's why.

But what media plans do not tell you, kids, is how to put a message into a medium so *that it makes the earth move in that medium.*

Take print.

I have it on good authority that some people actually read *books*. What's more, thanks to the Internet, *it's getting worse and worse!* Amazon! Chapters! Barnes & Noble! *Aaaagggghhh!!! People are reading copy!!!!*

Try to find a print *ad* that (a) provokes you to read it, with some headline like "Lemon,"* or "Attention Jews,"* and (b) then gives you about 110,000 nicely *persuasive* written words, *not in teeny reverse type, or set flush left and right in stupefying blocks.*

You know that car you lust after? Did you find out about it in the manufacturer's *ad*, or by reading the road report in *Car & Driver*? That's what I thought. Once again, car ads are conceived in what we used to call *The Lucky Girl School of Advertising*. As in *Lucky Girl... Her Man Drives a Jaguar!* Lah-dee-dah. Bullshit.

I don't care what you say, *Designed to Outperform...* (also known as the Dot Dot Dot School of Advertising) is *not* a viable headline.

Radio is a wonderful medium. Creative folks like it because the screen is bigger. Just ask Orson Welles. But when the "copywriter," who is actually auditioning for a gig at Yuk Yuks next Thursday, gets finished painting the word picture, and we're left with a guy burying a dead squirrel decently (remember?) for an airline, or a plutonium-plated, jet-propelled rocket booster with ejection seats for a cellphone company, it doesn't matter how big the screen is. The picture is wrong.

Once upon a time, we used to believe British TV spots were better than North American ones because *there had never been commercial radio in Britain*. So television ad



Content puts a message into a medium so it moves the earth in that medium. The ads need to do that too

concepts sprang directly from visual prompts, like film and television and stage (think Shakespeare) rather than being radio-with-pictures-tacked-on, like here.

TV is the show in show-and-tell. Watch *Holmes on Homes*. Was Canadian Tire so *old-fashioned* to show us guys using neat tools we'd never seen before? How exactly did that *pressure washer* get into your garage, buddy?

When I was still a small child (though with my own ad agency) a Brit named Lester *Bookbinder* (one of God's Little Jokes!) started shooting food, like lettuce and onions and tomatoes whatever in slo-mo surfing on splashing waves of spring water, and oh my gosh did it make you salivate, bark and paw the screen. How much *great* food prep and imaginative shooting do you see on TV? Hot mozzarella string-stretching between pizza slices is now *unremarkable*, okay?

And television was built for the Cult of Personality. You gotta love the two guys who play the Mac and the PC. If you stay up after 11, you know the PC is a mock commentator on *The Daily Show*. *Dingdingdingding!* Added Bonus! When is someone gonna get *Lewis Black* to do a spot?

Television is the show in show-and-tell. Watch *Holmes on Homes*. Was Canadian Tire so old-fashioned to show us guys using tools we'd never seen before?

As Boy Wonder, I used to cast John Candy, Catherine O'Hara, Eugene Levy, Dan Aykroyd, Andrea Martin and Dave Thomas to do my stuff whenever I could. Nobody knew who they were, of course. But I did.

And if this was an ad on the Internet, you'd be gettin' the fidgets, 'cause it's already probably too long, and it's not typeset like *mcsweeneys.net*

Barry Base is president and CD of Barry Base & Partners, Toronto. He clawed his way up through four major ad agencies and founded his own firm when still a small child. See highlights of his career to date on an egomaniacal Web site at www.barrybaseandpartners.com.

* "Lemon" was the famous one-word shocker Volkswagen print headline, admitting a VW bug had been spotted leaving the factory with an infinitesimal flaw, subsequently rectified. "Attention Jews" was the headline on a handbill on a post outside the Brooklyn apartment of a friend and New York ad guy, who used it ever after as an example of a head masterfully crafted to grab the attention of its target audience.



◀ By John Bradley ▶

Thank you and good night

Success usually comes through one of two ways: selling better stuff or selling stuff better. Of course the trick is to know the difference between “better” and “differently.” So in that vein I am nominating two brands for Brand of the Year, each of which I think does know the difference, and has performed one or both of those tasks admirably.

My vote for selling better stuff goes to the venerable Campbell Soup Company. In 1897, the Campbell Soup Company sent the

again in more recent times, where any pre-prepared foods are seen as being inherently not very good for us. Couple that with our unreasonable demands that prepared food not only be good for us, but also be 100% convenient and just as tasty as homemade, and the soup category would seem to be doomed.

Ain't necessarily so. Selling better stuff in this case means the same quality as before (just reminding us how good that is), but in better formats. By working hard to educate us as to the freshness of ingredients used, coupled with convenient new formats that suit our hyper-busy lifestyles, soup is now a booming category for Campbell's.



Campbell's is selling better stuff in the sense of better formats and pushing the high quality of its existing ingredients

inventor of condensed soup, a Dr. John T. Dorrance, trekking through the U.S.A. like a one-man Tupperware party, conducting taste tests to convince housewives to buy canned soup instead of making their own.

The barrier he was working so hard to overcome was that housewives a century ago invariably made their own soup, and refused to believe that soup from a tin could taste as good and be as nutritious. He won the battle, only for doubt to creep in once

Success usually comes through one of two ways: selling better stuff or selling stuff better.

Another organization I wouldn't have given a prayer for 10 years ago is Shoppers Drug Mart. Cramped aisles, ludicrously high prices, out-of-date products, everything out of stock. It was a nightmare. The Bradley family never spent a dime in Shoppers for the first eight years of our residence in Canada.

Then we had one of the “new design” Shoppers open in a strip mall near our house, and after one prospecting visit, we were hooked. It is everything a modern shopping experience should be. Bright, airy, welcoming and with a product range that makes a visit to Shoppers a fun experience for the entire family. We are constantly seduced back by the next tailored offer from our Optimum card and it is now our store of choice for prescriptions, Life brand OTC's, toiletries, top-up cereals, magazines, potato chips, Halloween masks and so on. Yes, we could get all, bar the Life brand, cheaper elsewhere – I have an infallible ready reckoner that a visit to

Shoppers costs \$40 a bag - but that is not the point. Shoppers simply sells stuff better than just about anyone else around.

Quickly on the advertising front, I think the year has been a bust. My big disappointment was the “new” Canadian Tire campaign. I know that neither Canadian Tire nor Taxi have any responsibilities beyond those to their shareholders, but I had hoped that the coming together of an iconic Canadian brand with an iconic Canadian agency could come up with something we would all be proud of. Am I the only person who sees the irony in the nation's biggest seller of WD40 seemingly being unable to find a tin to fix those gratingly squeaky signs? Perhaps they

are as baffled by the new store layout as am I; if I wanted to converse with the staff to find things, I'd already have been at Home Depot.

And on that note, I shall be signing off for good. It has been fun sharing with you my take on our profession, but you probably need some respite by now. Composing this column has inspired me to try my hand at writing a book, so thank you to all the people who e-mailed me encouraging comments about various columns. I would never have thought of it otherwise.

Twenty-plus years in marketing were enough for John Bradley; he left to do other things that interest him. He wrote this column to help the next generation of marketers simplify an overly complex profession. He values and responds to feedback at johnbradley@yknotsolutions.com.

We at *strategy* can't thank John enough for all the great columns he's done for us – and for always filing early. We'll greatly miss his wit and wisdom and hope this is only au revoir.

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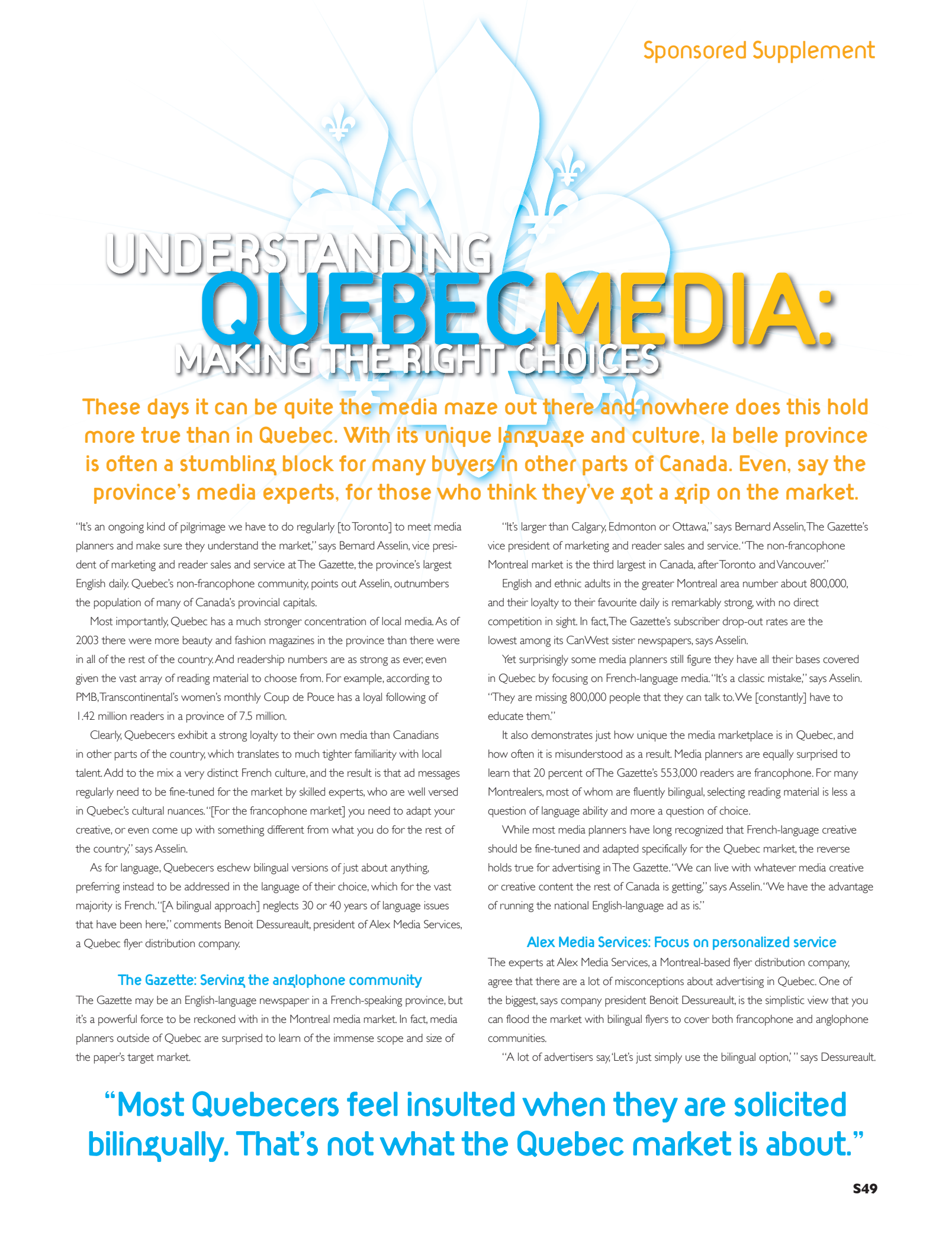
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UNDERSTANDING QUEBEC MEDIA: MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICES

These days it can be quite the media maze out there and nowhere does this hold more true than in Quebec. With its unique language and culture, la belle province is often a stumbling block for many buyers in other parts of Canada. Even, say the province's media experts, for those who think they've got a grip on the market.

"It's an ongoing kind of pilgrimage we have to do regularly [to Toronto] to meet media planners and make sure they understand the market," says Bernard Asselin, vice president of marketing and reader sales and service at The Gazette, the province's largest English daily. Quebec's non-francophone community, points out Asselin, outnumbers the population of many of Canada's provincial capitals.

Most importantly, Quebec has a much stronger concentration of local media. As of 2003 there were more beauty and fashion magazines in the province than there were in all of the rest of the country. And readership numbers are as strong as ever, even given the vast array of reading material to choose from. For example, according to PMB, Transcontinental's women's monthly Coup de Pouce has a loyal following of 1.42 million readers in a province of 7.5 million.

Clearly, Quebecers exhibit a strong loyalty to their own media than Canadians in other parts of the country, which translates to much tighter familiarity with local talent. Add to the mix a very distinct French culture, and the result is that ad messages regularly need to be fine-tuned for the market by skilled experts, who are well versed in Quebec's cultural nuances. "[For the francophone market] you need to adapt your creative, or even come up with something different from what you do for the rest of the country," says Asselin.

As for language, Quebecers eschew bilingual versions of just about anything, preferring instead to be addressed in the language of their choice, which for the vast majority is French. "[A bilingual approach] neglects 30 or 40 years of language issues that have been here," comments Benoit Dessureault, president of Alex Media Services, a Quebec flyer distribution company.

The Gazette: Serving the anglophone community

The Gazette may be an English-language newspaper in a French-speaking province, but it's a powerful force to be reckoned with in the Montreal media market. In fact, media planners outside of Quebec are surprised to learn of the immense scope and size of the paper's target market.

"It's larger than Calgary, Edmonton or Ottawa," says Bernard Asselin, The Gazette's vice president of marketing and reader sales and service. "The non-francophone Montreal market is the third largest in Canada, after Toronto and Vancouver."

English and ethnic adults in the greater Montreal area number about 800,000, and their loyalty to their favourite daily is remarkably strong, with no direct competition in sight. In fact, The Gazette's subscriber drop-out rates are the lowest among its CanWest sister newspapers, says Asselin.

Yet surprisingly some media planners still figure they have all their bases covered in Quebec by focusing on French-language media. "It's a classic mistake," says Asselin. "They are missing 800,000 people that they can talk to. We [constantly] have to educate them."

It also demonstrates just how unique the media marketplace is in Quebec, and how often it is misunderstood as a result. Media planners are equally surprised to learn that 20 percent of The Gazette's 553,000 readers are francophone. For many Montrealers, most of whom are fluently bilingual, selecting reading material is less a question of language ability and more a question of choice.

While most media planners have long recognized that French-language creative should be fine-tuned and adapted specifically for the Quebec market, the reverse holds true for advertising in The Gazette. "We can live with whatever media creative or creative content the rest of Canada is getting," says Asselin. "We have the advantage of running the national English-language ad as is."

Alex Media Services: Focus on personalized service

The experts at Alex Media Services, a Montreal-based flyer distribution company, agree that there are a lot of misconceptions about advertising in Quebec. One of the biggest, says company president Benoit Dessureault, is the simplistic view that you can flood the market with bilingual flyers to cover both francophone and anglophone communities.

"A lot of advertisers say, 'Let's just simply use the bilingual option,'" says Dessureault.

"Most Quebecers feel insulted when they are solicited bilingually. That's not what the Quebec market is about."

UNDERSTANDING QUEBEC MEDIA: MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICES

GAZETTE: OUTSTANDING MARKET PENETRATION

Market penetration is a strong indicator of success for any ad, and The Gazette is certainly impressive in this area. Almost three-quarters of Montreal's English-language adults read the newspaper, which by any standard represents remarkable reach into a target market.

"Every week 70 percent of anglophones [in the greater Montreal area] are reading The Gazette," says Asselin, citing a recent NADbank survey. "We have the highest reach of anglophones in Montreal."

Altogether, about 350,000 English adults read The Gazette. With more than 112,000 additional francophone readers and more than 90,000 ethnic readers, the paper's total readership is 553,000.

As well, given the paper's unique English-language status in the city, anglophone readership is often exclusive. "We're the only English-language daily in Montreal," says Asselin, "so that's almost a captive audience."

The Gazette also benefits from Quebecers' penchant for homegrown products. "In Quebec, there is a lot of loyalty for [local] newspapers, television shows and TV stations," says Asselin. "It's not the same in English Canada. We benefit from this."



70% of English Montrealers
read The Gazette.

"But most Quebecers feel insulted when they are solicited bilingually. That's not what the Quebec market is about."

Francophones, explains Dessureault, have the right to be addressed in French, while anglophones have the right to be addressed in English. And while flyers in Quebec need to be either French or bilingual by law, unilingual English flyers are allowed in English publications like The Gazette, providing an opportunity to target anglophones in their mother tongue. "It is a better selling solution to solicit people in the language of their choice," says Dessureault.

With a client list that includes national brands like Home Depot and Future Shop, as well as three of the province's major newspapers, Dessureault knows a thing or two about effective targeting in Quebec. Alex Media's distribution business was launched in 1993, and its carrier network in 2003. Since then the company has successfully managed to break the province's once strong distribution monopoly and today it has a reach of 1.5 million doors in Montreal and Quebec City. Plans are also underway to extend this network to other regions in the province.

Are you talkin' to me?

The Gazette
Words matter

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Alex Media Services Inc.



Custom Exhibits



Portable Displays



Event Signage

Modular Displays



The Exhibit & Display Specialists

Since 1947, Worden-Watson has been producing quality custom exhibits that have put our customers in the spotlight. For more information, about our services and products, phone today and speak with an exhibit consultant or visit our website.



EXHIBIT MARKETING

FIRST IMPRESSIONS COUNT

FIRST IMPRESSIONS COUNT
MARKETING
EXHIBIT



Tennessee Williams once quipped, “Life is all memory, except for the present moment that goes by so quick you hardly catch it going.” That moment seems to go by even quicker on showroom and tradeshow floors. There, savvy marketers have mere seconds to catch the attention of their audience and make a memorable impression.

A recent survey, conducted by Exhibit Surveys, Inc., an industry-research and metrics firm, illustrates how thinly stretched visitors are: In 2005, attendees spent an average of 7.8 hours visiting all exhibits at a typical show. If a show features 125 total exhibitors, that’s just 3.7 minutes per booth!

That’s why companies such as Nimlok Canada, and

Worden-Watson strive to make your exhibit stand out, stop traffic and translate quality leads into sales. These industry pioneers and leaders employ the best display designers in the business and new technology to cut through tradeshow clutter. Enlist their services to write your script, dress the set, cast actors and collect audience reviews for your next show.

On Display

Advertising is a visual medium, but exhibit marketing transforms the message into a total sensory experience. Unlike 2-D commercials and billboards, “exhibits are tangible and create a place for face-to-face interaction between customer and brand,” explains Tina Vedovat, president of Nimlok Canada, one of the country’s leading display firms.

As Vedovat points out, exhibits allow live product demos, in real-time, while allowing companies to increase their brand awareness to prospective clients. “As any good sales person will tell you, the secret to success is the number of face-to-face meetings they conduct.” Displays give exhibitors complete control in acquiring qualified leads for their business.

Since 1984, Nimlok has been providing complete face-to-face solutions for the exhibit industry, from blueprint to break down. Nimlok knows the key to show success is a clear focus and a unifying theme. It’s creating a message



Worden-Watson specialize in stopping tradeshow traffic with unforgettable brand experiences



that sticks with attendees long after they've left the building.

Before the company's award-winning design team begins building a traffic-stopping booth, they conduct a thorough needs assessment:

- What is your marketing objective?
- Who are your competitors and what are they doing?
- What is the goal you want to achieve at this tradeshow?
- What is your budget?
- What is your plan to turn leads into customers?

Building Buzz

Armed with a clear objective, Nimlok's display designers literally elevate the message to another level. Before initiating booth construction, they sketch out several possibilities with each individual client to visualize an impactful and engaging exhibit that directly pays off the marketing mandate.

Designers then build a booth layout that invites traffic flow. Colour plays off a company's logo and branding to make it memorable. Visually stimulating, larger-than-life graphics draw attention. Strategic lighting, scents, and audiovisual elements combine to create a unique booth ambience without over stimulating the senses. Nimlok also helps coordinate guest speakers and facilitate contests featuring branded prizes.

A focused, stimulating display builds traffic. "With more traffic comes increased brand awareness and the chance to captivate more real leads," says Vedovat. If you build it—and build it well—they will come.

Keep it Simple

"A successful exhibit is a balance between the product, design, budget and a keen understanding of the marketing objectives," says Glenn Worden, president of Toronto's Worden-Watson. For more than five decades, the company has conceptualized and executed countless displays for leading retailers, auto manufacturers, pharmaceutical companies and financial institutions.

Worden warns, "Too often, displays overpower the product itself." When



Nimlok delivers eye-catching exhibits coupled with functionality and purpose.

planning an exhibit, avoid the "terrible toos." Too much text, too many graphics and too many structures can result in too few quality leads, or direct sales. Companies like Worden-Watson help clients present a focused message or theme. They then hone in on the key product, convey the message in a clear, graphic manner and encourage staffing the exhibit with knowledgeable and professional experts.

Room to Grow

Worden-Watson produces custom exhibits that allow for maximum creative freedom and increased flexibility while stretching every marketing dollar. With a complete awareness of the brand image and the marketing purpose of a display, the team assembles a custom booth that is functional and has the visual power to literally stop customers in their tracks.

Often one exhibit is shared by different departments within one organization and may be required to have multiple personalities. Or, as Worden



Worden-Watson created an immersive brand experience for Jeep Canada.

Rock and Roll with Worden-Watson

Looking to convey an authentic brand experience at the Toronto International Auto Show, Jeep looked to Worden-Watson, their exhibit partners of the past 59 years. The Worden-Watson team designed and produced a unique exhibit using fiberglass molded from real rock formations to bring the outdoors inside and deliver an immersive Jeep brand experience to the tradeshow attendees.

The exhibit, nicknamed "Jeep Rock", elevated the SUV more than 12 feet in the air, at somewhat extreme angles, "driving" on the rocky terrain. To complete the rugged, outdoor scene was complete with a running waterfall. The effect garnered increased tradeshow traffic attention. The objective of delivering the Jeep brand aura to the tradeshow attendees was met and exceeded.

Worden-Watson has long been known as the exhibit and display company that delivers unique and compelling exhibit solutions. As an industry first, Worden-Watson suspended Dodge vehicles from the ceiling of the Toronto International Auto Show. This radical display mesmerized tradeshow traffic and reinforced the Dodge brand.

Check out www.wordenwatson.com for more examples of cutting-edge custom display design.



Nimlok's modular systems provides flexibility and expansion capabilities

Nimlok: Best in Show

Nimlok is a one-stop show shop. The company provides turnkey services, from in-house design, graphics and customer service, to show installation, dismantling and display storage. With a network of 200 distributors in 56 countries, and production facilities in Canada, the U.S. and the United Kingdom, Nimlok displays let clients attend simultaneous shows, exhibit internationally and evolve displays to match changing marketing objectives.

Kevro, a high-end audio manufacturer, recently enlisted Nimlok to build a booth to suit a very focused goal—to promote their latest line of speakers. After working with Nimlok's innovative design team, the client realized the need for a flexible solution that could accommodate their changing product line over the course of the coming year.

Nimlok expanded the display from 20-by-20 feet to 40-by-20, future-proofing the booth for upcoming launches. Nimlok's modular exhibit system and extensive support services make your display as flexible as your marketing needs.

Visit www.nimlok.ca for more information.

points out, many clients enter shows with larger custom exhibits, but also need an exhibit flexible enough for smaller venues.

Modular display systems, including the Clip Display System, Pop-up displays, Multi-fold Displays and banner stands, can also be designed to integrate with the custom exhibit design to create a unified brand image.

Can we talk?

Your design has set the stage. The props (demos, literature, giveaways) are in place. Staffers can make or break your offering in the theatre of face-to-face marketing. "How the customer is treated when they are in an exhibit is probably the most important part of the process after we've done our job," explains Worden.

Every hour, 24 hours a day, a **Nimlok solution** is producing results somewhere in the world.



Call us today and find out how we can help your business get noticed.



Nimlok strives to combine style, image, and elegance with basic fundamentals such as traffic flow and branding.; Worden-Watson always considers Access and Crowd Control in the planning stages of any exhibit design.

A study conducted by the Trade Show Exhibitor's Association found the performance of booth staff accounts for about 85 per cent of an exhibit's success. Ensure all staff are well rehearsed with the script—the product specs and the marketing objective - and make sure they sell rather than just tell. Asking qualifying questions can mean the difference between a stellar performance and a rotten tomato.

The Metric System

How do you know if your exhibit was successful? Many clients judge success based on the number of people they talk to at a show, but leads gathered simply because of a glitzy display, or cool giveaway can be misleading. As Worden suggests, "Too much emphasis is placed on the number of leads gathered at a show, rather than the one-on-one relationship that is built at the booth." It is that relationship that turns a conversation into a future sale.

Expert exhibit companies such as Worden-Watson work closely with clients to establish effective metrics, tailored to each individual display. Measurement mechanisms should take into account many variables, including number of attendees at a given show, how prospects are managed at the exhibit and, most importantly, how that lead gets translated into a sale after the show.

Building your booth is only half the challenge. Establish tracking tools well before show time. A well-designed display might generate hundreds of leads, but sales people, having just manned that exhibit, may not have time to follow-up immediately. Working with your solutions provider, develop an appropriate tracking scheme, from hiring extra personnel to implementing an automated system. A booth without a lead measurement mechanism is like a display without graphics, lighting or staff—it just doesn't work for you.

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Who will grace the cover of *strategy's* 2006 Agency of the Year issue? ►



11/29-30.

DEMMX – Digital Entertainment Media + Marketing Conference & Awards. A 360 view on the rapidly evolving digital entertainment, marketing and media landscape presented by *Billboard Magazine*. Speakers include Vince Broady, head of entertainment, games and youth at Yahoo! And Mitch Feinman, SVP at Fox Mobile Entertainment. Hyatt Regency Century Plaza, Los Angeles. 646.654.5170. www.demmx.com.

Other notable **dates.**

11/05-07. CAB 2006 Annual Convention. The Canadian Association of Broadcasters' yearly confab has lots to interest advertisers. For instance, Satisfying the Connected Consumer: Content Creation in a Wired and Wireless World looks at who is going to distribute multiplatform content and, more importantly, what's the business model? The Hon. Bev Oda, minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women, keynotes. Westin Bayshore, Vancouver. 613.233.4035. www.cab-acr.ca. • **11/17. The Canadian Marketing Association Awards** honour advertising that gets results. Westin Harbour Castle Hotel, Toronto. 416.644.3763 or 800.267.8805 x224. www.the-cma.org. • **12/04-05. Marketing to Men (Ages 18-34) Executive Summit.** Hosted by *Adweek* et al, this conference examines how to reach this fragmented market using everything from sports and videogames to music, movies and magazines. MGM Grand, Las Vegas. www.billboardevents.com. • **12/04-06. PDMA/IIR Voice of the Customer Conference.** Put on by the Product Development & Management Association and the Institute for International Research, presentations include Managing Insights Across a Global Portfolio of Brands with Michael Huie and Julie Bizzis of Whirlpool. Hilton San Diego Resort, San Diego. 888-670-8200. www.iirusa.com. • **12/06-07. Advertising: What's Next? The Journey to 2010.** Presented by the Advertising Research Foundation, this workshop for senior executives addresses how to engage disengaged consumers and how to mobilize the new mobility. Argent Hotel, San Francisco. 212.751.5656. x217. www.TheArf.org.

DEVIANT MEDIA

IS THERE ANY PLACE FOR MARKETERS TO BOLDY GO WHERE NO AD HAS GONE BEFORE?

It seems the nature of what is and isn't media has become very porous lately. It got us pondering whether there was any scope left for a planner to deviate from the path.

So we asked Dentsu to have a think on the subject. After all, they did create Beggartising and Tatootising to promote MiC Forum. And the agency counts online casino GoldenPalace among its clients – a marketer known for placing logos on every conceivable portion of the body and buying the Virgin Mary Grilled Cheese. Here's what they came up with (minus the condom-vertising).

BOTTOM'S UP

There are certainly a number of adult beverage brands looking for exposure and surely in-bar is the battleground where the war is to be won. Alcohol advertising involves finding the best-known tipplers in any given bar and offering a small sum to place an advertising message on their shoe bottoms. When they inevitably hit the floor, voila, the sponsor's logo is exposed to the gawking masses with striking confirmation that they have indeed come across another satisfied customer.



SHIT'S HAPPENING

Toilet seat advertising? But how can it be read? Patrons feeling the ills of a poor brand selection can be given an alternate choice for their next social occasion, the timely message delivered as the "heavy user" is strongly considering a brand switch.

CARTOLOGY

Packaged goods are always a challenge. Save your traditional television and print spend and gather an army of "Cart Stalkers." This group will silently trail unsuspecting grocery shoppers obsessively attempting to slip your product into their cart. By the time the shoppers hit the checkout and realize they have a stowaway on board, they are simply too lazy or too embarrassed to return it and our sampling program is complete.



FOCUS GROUP

Looking for total ubiquity? Clients like Coca-Cola, Nike and Apple are pretty good at being everywhere. But are they truly everywhere? That's where contact lens advertising comes in. One phone call and your brand message is cleverly hidden on the contact lenses of millions of unsuspecting users who believe that they cannot turn their head without seeing a sea of swoosh or a bevy of bitten apples.

So is deviant media a bad thing? Cheating? Inherently evil? Not if it works. Make it your friend and sleep well at night knowing that a sale is a sale is a sale, no matter how (and where) you make it.

Chris Pastirik and Friends, Dentsu Canada



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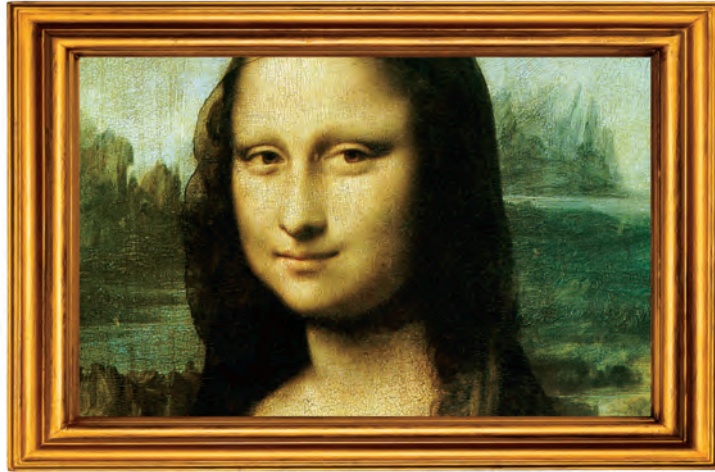
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